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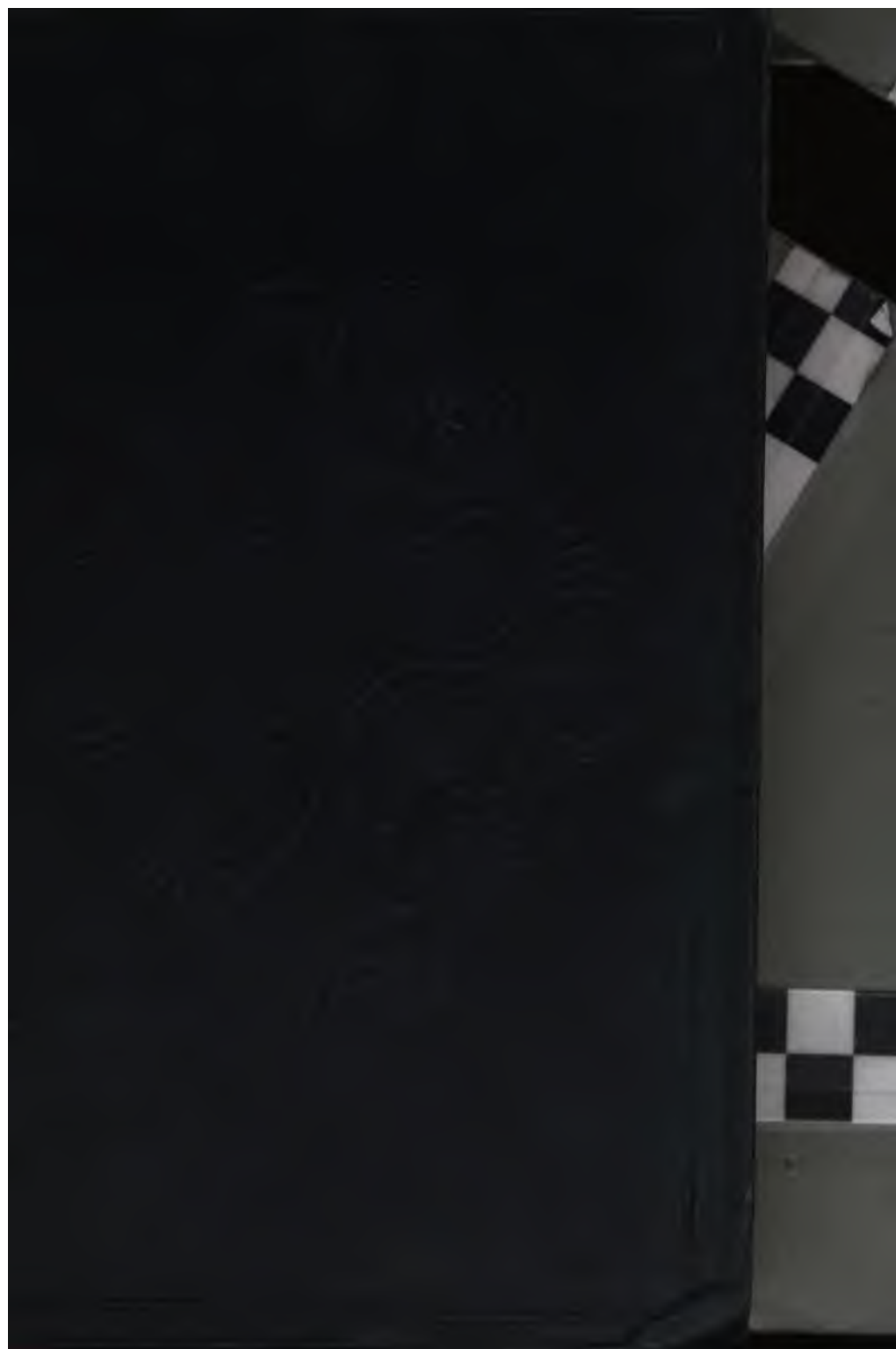
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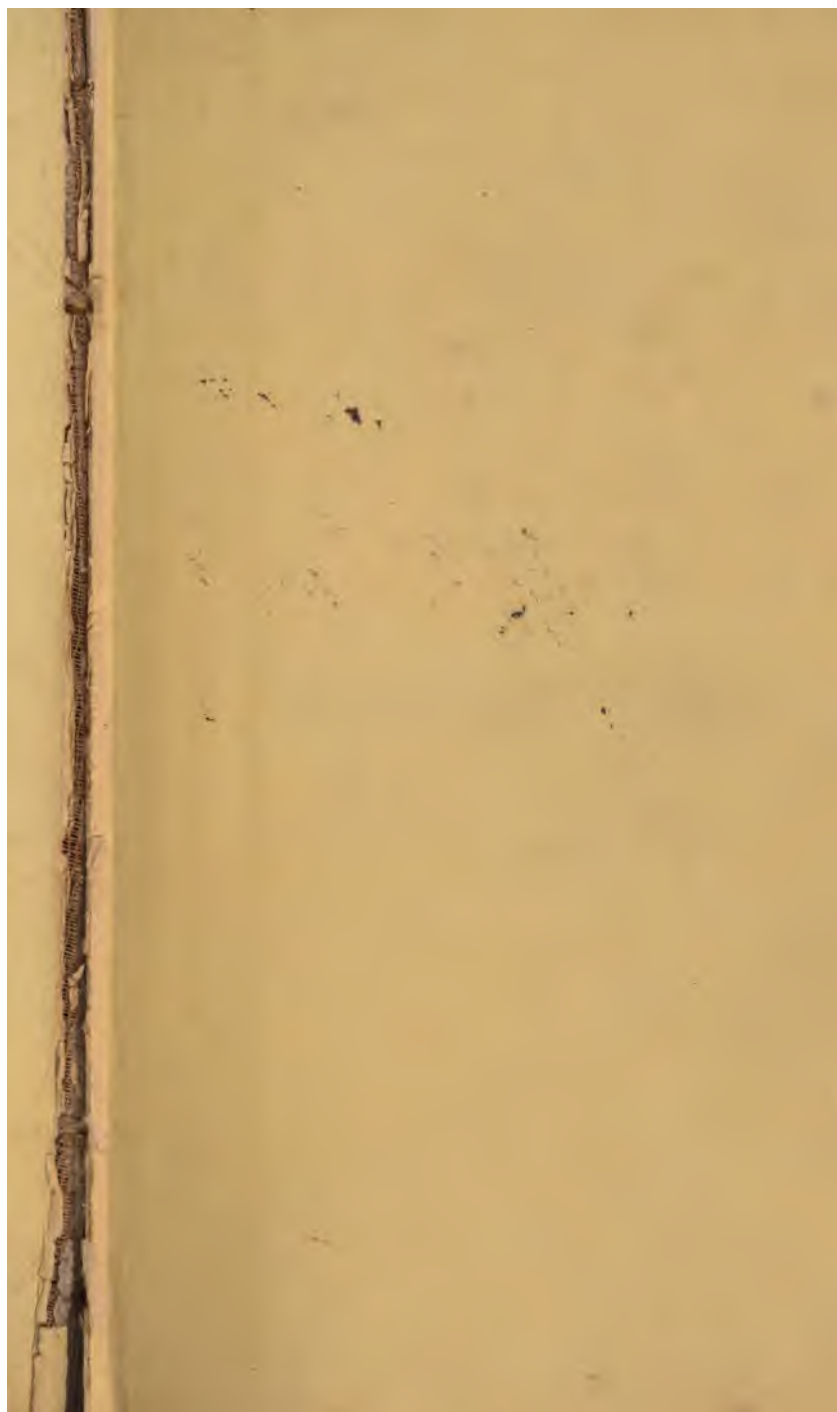
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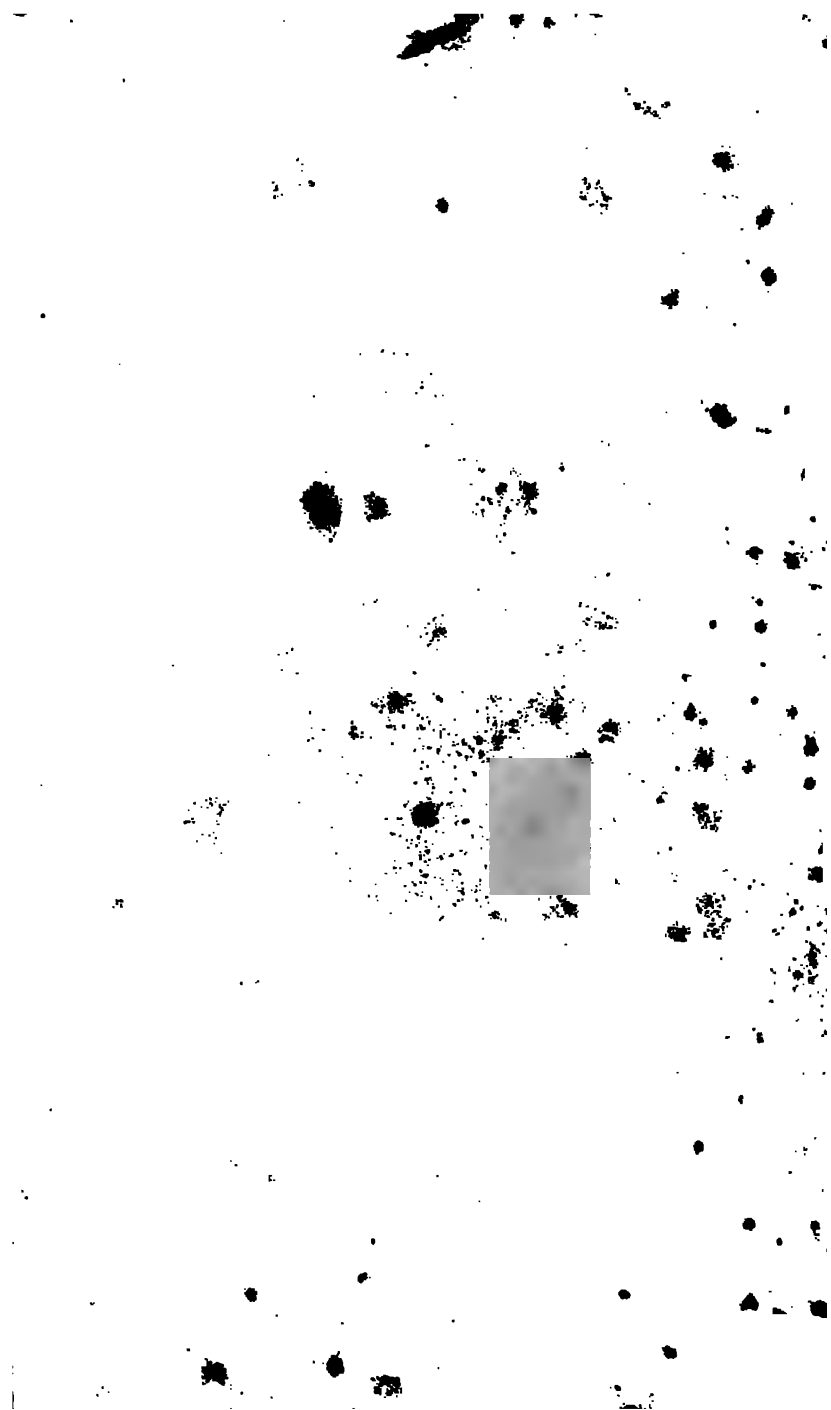
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MEMOIRS
OF THE
QUEENS OF FRANCE.

VOL. I.



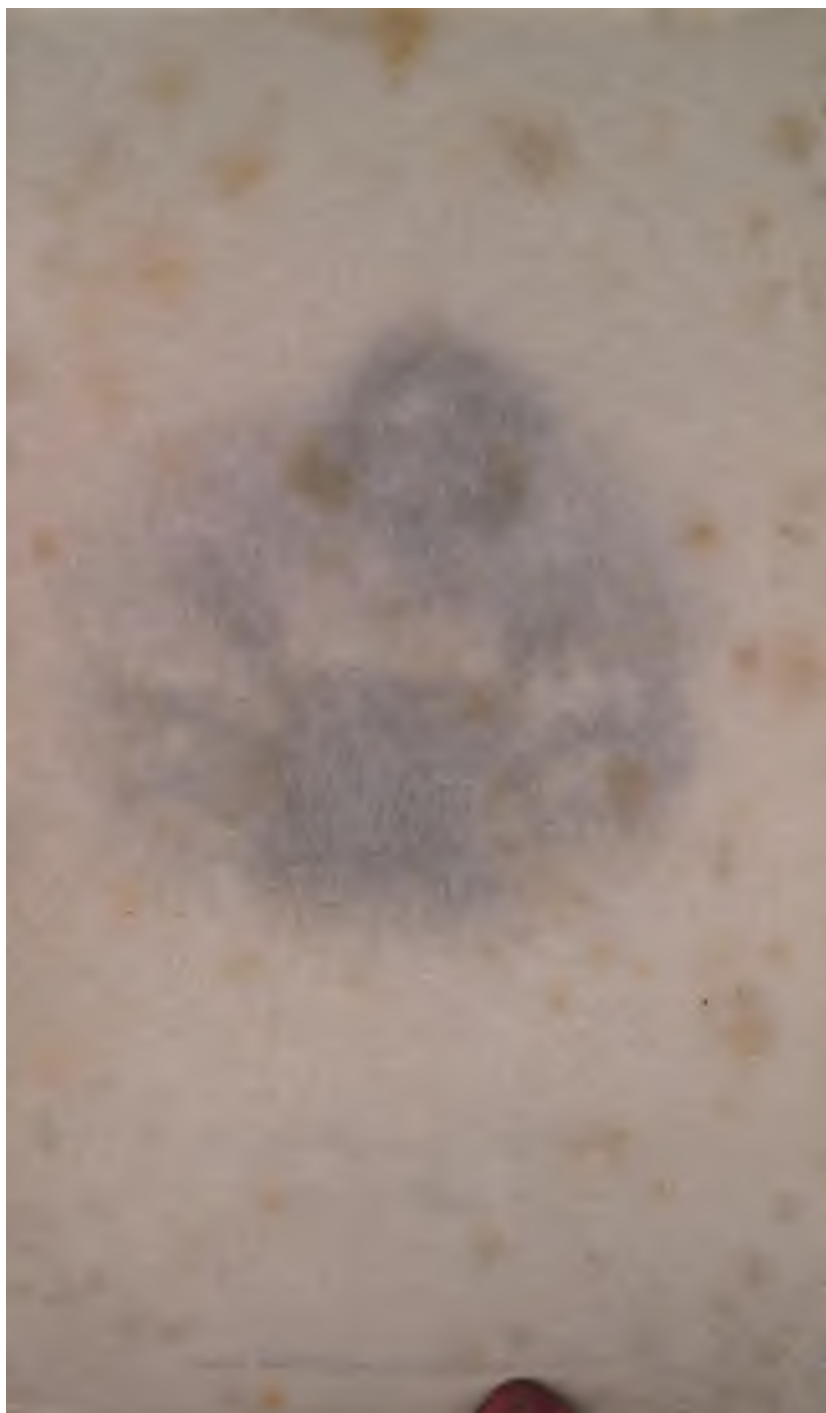




*Queen Eleanor of Austria
Consort of Francis I.*

London: Henry Colburn

19. 2/6



MEMOIRS
OF THE
QUEENS OF FRANCE.

BY M^{RS} FORBES BUSH.

11

SECOND EDITION.

DEDICATED, BY EXPRESS PERMISSION,

TO

THE QUEEN OF THE FRENCH;

AND CONTAINING

A PORTRAIT AND MEMOIR OF HER MAJESTY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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TO HER MAJESTY,
Marie Amélie,
QUEEN OF THE FRENCH,
THESE MEMOIRS
ARE, BY GRACIOUS PERMISSION,
INSCRIBED BY
HER MAJESTY'S FAITHFUL AND OBLIGED SERVANT,
ANNIE FORBES BUSH.

P R E F A C E

TO

T H E S E C O N D E D I T I O N .

THE very favourable impression which the publication of this work occasioned, as well on the Continent as in London, obtained for the author a most gracious permission from the Queen of the French, to dedicate it to Her Majesty.

Flattered by so gracious a mark of Her Majesty's condescension and favour, the Author has been induced to add a Memoir of the Queen of the French, obtained from sources exclusively authentic, and never before published. She may here, perhaps, be permitted to state, that the whole of the Memoirs were written in *France*, and compiled exclusively from researches in that country. She gratefully acknowledges the commendation of the press generally, and trusts to as favourable a reception of the present edition.

Paris, July, 1843.

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QUEENS OF FRANCE.

MEROVINGIAN RACE.

QUEEN BASINE.

(Reign of Childeric I.)

FOUR hundred years after the commencement of the Christian era, the northern barbarians, who were attracted towards Gaul by the beauty of the country, and the salubrity of the climate, made incursions into the Gallic States, then in the possession of the Romans, who, under Julius Cæsar, had been ten years in achieving this conquest, and who fought long and bravely to preserve that which their predecessors had obtained with so much difficulty. The Romans, however, experienced an entire defeat under their general, Syagrius, and in the year 486 Gaul fell into the power of the Franks who were commanded by their chief, Chlodovich, or Clovis (from which name that of Louis is de-

rived), and from that period the name of France was bestowed on Gaul by its conquerors.

Clovis was the first chief who bore the title of King of France; for although several of his predecessors had acquired great advantage in their attacks upon the Romans, hitherto they had ultimately been repulsed with such vigour that they were frequently obliged to re-cross the Rhine; and Clovis was the first who resided as sole conqueror in France. The trifling importance attached to the greater number of the first race of kings, the similarity of their names, and, above all, the continual division of their states, inevitably introduced a degree of confusion into their history.

Prior to the entire subjugation of Gaul by the Franks under Clovis, four French chiefs had successively reigned over a part of the country as kings; but very little is known of them, France having been at that time shrouded in the mist of barbarism.

History affords no record of the names of the wives of the first three of those kings,—Pharamond, Clodion, and Merovee. Fredegher recounts, that the wife of Clodion, bathing one day in the sea, was surprised by a monster, by whom she had the war-

like Merovee, whose glorious conquests entitled him to give his name to the kings of the first race. Basine was the wife of the fourth chief, Childeric I.

This prince resided at Tournai, and was for some time an object of love and loyalty to the Franks; but he was of libertine habits, and caused his captains and principal officers so much indignation by his treatment of their wives and sisters, that they deposed him in the year of our Lord 460, when he took refuge in Thuringia, a province of Saxony, where he received an asylum, and a warm welcome from the king.

Childeric did not forego his love of pleasure, though it had cost him his government. Being young, handsome, and courageous, he attracted the admiration of the queen, Basine, whose husband, the king of Thuringia, unsuspecting of the criminality of either, had commanded her to receive the exiled prince with the utmost friendship. Childeric was regardless of the laws of hospitality, and conceived an attachment for his protector's wife, which lasted during the eight years that he remained at the court of Thuringia.

At the expiration of this time the Franks re-

called their chief, in the year 468; and after his departure, Basine declared herself incapable of enduring the separation, and leaving her husband and children, rejoined him at Tournai, declaring that "if she could find a prince still more brave than Childeric, she would devote herself to him." This false and criminal mode of reasoning was approved by Childeric, who received her, and, as in those days of ignorance and paganism nothing but actual possession constituted the marriage bond, she became his wife. According to the historians who have left annals of those times, the king of Thuringia was not offended at this desertion of him by his queen, or at the treachery of his guest and friend.

This princess possessed so much more ability and acquirements than the generality of her sex at that epoch, that she exercised great influence over the minds of the vulgar, and was believed to be a sorceress. She had three children while she was the wife of the king of Thuringia, and after her marriage with Childeric became the mother of Clovis, the most illustrious chief and conqueror of the Franks, and the first Christian king who reigned over France. She also gave birth to two daughters

of whom one, Lantilde, married Theodoric, king of the Visigoths.

The precise time of Basine's death cannot be ascertained, but it is certain that she survived her husband.

QUEEN CLOTILDE, CLODOILDE, OR CROTILDE.

(Reign of Clovis.)

PREVIOUSLY to his marriage with Clotilde, Clovis had a wife of whom nothing is known, beyond that of her being the mother of Thierry, who afterwards shared some portion of the government with his brothers by the second marriage.

Clotilde was the daughter of Chilperic, king of Burgundy. During her childhood, her uncle Gondebaud, who was ambitious of wresting the kingdom from the hands of his elder brother, raised forces and brought an army against him. Chilperic was unsuccessful in his opposition, and being taken prisoner, he and his two sons were put to death by order of Gondebaud, and his wife thrown into the Rhône. Satisfied with having thus

fed his cruel vengeance, he spared Clotilde in consideration of her sex and tender age, and bestowed great care and attention on the young orphan, whom he caused to be educated in the Catholic religion, which he himself professed without practising.

Clovis, who deemed that an alliance with so powerful a neighbour was desirable, sent ambassadors to demand the hand of Clotilde in marriage. She was then fifteen years of age, and extremely beautiful.* Although Clovis did not profess Christianity,

* The circumstance is represented as follows in a scene of *Odysee*. The Gaul, Aurelian, disguised as a mendicant and carrying a wallet on his back, is charged to deliver a ring which Clovis sends to Clotilde. Aurelian arrives at the gates of the town (Geneva), where he finds Clotilde sitting in company with her sister Saedchlemba, both of whom are engaged in exercising their hospitality towards travellers. Clotilde expresses her desire to wash the feet of Aurelian, who, leaning towards her, informs her in a low tone that he has important news to communicate to her, if she will conduct him to a retired spot. Clotilde bids him speak, and Aurelian tells her that his master, Clovis, earnestly desires to espouse her, and to assure her of the sincerity of his intentions sends her his ring. Clotilde accepts the gift, an expression of joy animates her countenance, she presents the messenger with a hundred sous in gold as a reward for his trouble, and sends back her own ring to Clovis, bidding him to send ambassadors promptly to her uncle. Aurelian departs and falls asleep on the way, during which a mendicant robs him of his wallet, which contains Clotilde's ring; the robber is found and beaten with

Gondebaud feared to offend the young conqueror, whose very name inspired terror, by refusing his demand; while Clotilde, who was delighted at the brilliant prospect offered her, and desirous to quit an uncle for whom she felt no affection, eagerly accepted the proposal. In consequence she was solemnly espoused in the name of the king of France by a noble Gaul, named Aurelian, who presented her with a denier, as a token of the union. This marriage took place in the year 493.

Every endeavour was made by the two sovereigns, Gondebaud and Clovis, to render this union brilliant. Clovis awaited the arrival of the young Queen at Soissons, which she entered seated in a magnificent chariot drawn by bulls, and loaded with rich presents

rods. Clovis sends ambassadors, to whom his bride is confided, and who conduct her in a litter. Clotilde fearing to be pursued by her enemy, Aridius, whose persuasions may have changed the resolution of Gondebaud, and being impatient to proceed, mounts a horse, and gallops over the country. Aridius, who arrives at Geneva from Marseilles, assures Gondebaud that Clotilde will not fail to avenge her relations, aided by all the power of the Franks; and the terrified Gondebaud pursues Clotilde, who, foreseeing what would happen, had given orders to burn and ravage the land for fifty miles behind her. When safely arrived, she fervently thanks heaven for granting her the commencement of the vengeance she intends for the murderer of her parents.

from Gondebaud. She was hailed with joyful acclamations by the Franks as well as by the conquered people, the latter of whom were devotedly attached to the Christian faith, which was the religion of their birth, as it led them to hope that the king of the Franks would one day be induced to embrace it, on account of the reputed piety of his queen ; and they were not disappointed. Clotilde's fascinating manners and zealous arguments made a very forcible impression on her husband, which political affairs contributed to heighten.

The Suabians and Bavarians, two barbarian nations who, like the Franks, were from Germany, invaded Gaul, for the purpose of disputing its rich territories. Clovis hastened to encounter them, and gave them battle at Tolbiac, on the borders of the Rhine, near Cologne. The event of the contest was for some time doubtful, both armies fought furiously, and on each side there was great slaughter ; but seeing his troops hesitate, in a moment of extremity the prince invoked the God whom Clotilde worshipped, swearing to embrace her faith if he vanquished his enemies. He then rallied and encouraged his soldiers, and, after a severe contest,

succeeded in putting the Germans to flight in the year 496.

Immediately after concluding this victory, Clovis abjured heathenism and embraced Christianity, with great pomp and solemnity, at Rheims, where he was baptized by Saint Remi; and the greater number of Franks, following his example, became Christians. The Church, in consideration of this addition to its followers, and in remembrance of the act, has canonised Clotilde.

Notwithstanding his adoption of the Christian religion, Clovis sullied his hands with many barbarous murders; and the queen, equally vindictive, has left in her annals many atrocious acts to attest the cruelty of her disposition. She considered all her own enemies as the enemies of God. Deaf to the claims of gratitude, she excited Clovis not only to murder Gondebaud, but manifested the same bitter sentiments of hatred towards the sons that she had displayed towards the father.

After the death of Clovis, which occurred in 511, Clotilde left Paris, where she and her husband had resided in the Palace of Thermes—formerly the abode of the Emperor Julian, when he reigned in

glory and tranquillity over the Gauls—and retired to Tours, for the purpose of devoting herself to religious observances, near the tomb of St. Martin.

Clovis left four sons, the three youngest—Clodomir, Childberg, and Clotaire—by Clotilde.

Notwithstanding her attention to religious observances, this queen had still leisure to devote to sundry acts of vengeance. She was incessant in her exhortations to her sons to persecute the children of her murdered uncle Gondebaud; and they were but too ready to yield to her criminal entreaties. The result was that the inheritor of the crown of Burgundy fell a victim to the instigations of this fierce and unnatural woman: in the year 524 he was thrown into a well, after witnessing the decapitation of his wife and children. His brother escaped assassination, and Clotilde's eldest son, Clodomir, perished in pursuit of him.

After the death of Clodomir, Clotilde declared his three sons, Theodobert, Gonther, and Clodoald, heirs to the throne of their father; but her two surviving sons, worthy of such a mother, opposed their succession, determining to usurp the kingdom; and in order to effect their purpose they availed them-

selves of an opportunity to seize the young princes, and convey them away from the protection of Clotilde. Not content with this insult, they sent one of their satellites, named Arcade, to Tours with a poignard and a pair of scissors, informing her that she might choose between the death of her grandchildren or the depriving them of their hair, as the greatest mark of indignity they could offer to the throne.*

The queen hoped that their respect for herself would induce them to yield the succession to her grandsons, and desired the messenger to inform

* The Franks swore by the hair of their heads ; none but persons of distinction being permitted to wear long hair. At the age of twelve the hair of children of the common class was first cut, which was the origin of a family fête called *Capitolatoria*. Conspirators were condemned to cut off each other's hair. The Visigoths attached the same importance as the Franks to long hair : in the year 628 a canon of the Council of Toledo declared that none who had suffered their hair to be cut could succeed to the throne. Clovis and his companions, on returning from the conquest of the Visigoths, offered some of the hairs of their head to the bishops as pledges and promises of protection.

Thierry III. recovered his royalty and dignity, which he had lost with his hair, but which returned when it grew again.

Clovis having ordered the hair of King Caravick to be taken off, that sovereign shed tears at the shame with which that act overwhelmed him ; when his son consoled him with these words :—
“ Les feuilles tordues sur les bois vert ne se sont pas séchées ; elles renaissent promptement.”—(Chateaubriand.)

Childberg and Clotaire that she would rather be witness to their death than that they should be deprived of their sceptre or condemned to a monastic life. In consequence of which these ferocious uncles strangled two of the unhappy children with their own hands, and confined the third in a cloister, where he remained until his death, and is invoked by the Catholic Church till this day under the title of St. Cloud.

Doubtless the pangs of remorse hastened the career of this unprincipled woman, who lived too long for the happiness of her people. Before her death she had the grief of seeing her two sons opposed to one another on the field of battle.

It was the conduct of this queen which caused the introduction of the Salique Law into France. The Church honoured Clotilde as a saint, but History ranks her amongst the worst of queens.

Clotilde died in the year 568, aged seventy-seven, and was interred at Paris with great pomp, by the side of her husband, Clovis, in the church of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, now called Saint Geneviève. She gave birth to four sons,—Ingomere, who died young ; Clodomir ; Childberg, first king of Paris ;

and Clotaire, first king of France. She had also two daughters,—Clotilde, who was married to Amaury, a prince of the Visigoths; and Childesinde, who was dedicated from her youth to the church.

QUEEN ULTROGOTHE.

(Reign of Chilberg I.)

ULTROGOTHE was a native of Spain, but of the circumstances relative to her introduction into France there is no record. She was married to Childberg I., afterwards king of Paris, in the year 511.

Very little is known of this princess, but the monks, who were almost the only persons in those days who could either read or write, have chronicled her amongst the most virtuous and devout of women; that she was strict in her religious observances, and generous towards churches and monasteries, there is no doubt, and that circumstance alone was quite sufficient to render her an object of praise to her pious historians, whose rhapsodies have often built up the reputation of princes. She lived in the palace of Thermes de Julien, with her

husband. This palace, which was the ordinary residence of the first race of kings, was surrounded by beautiful gardens, which the queen and her daughters Crotberge and Crodesinde were in the habit of frequenting on their daily visit to the church of Saint Germain-des-Prés, which was built in the centre of the palace gardens. The erection of the church of Saint Germain l'Auxerrois is attributed to this queen.

Ultrogothe was the only wife of Childberg; a very remarkable circumstance in the epoch in which she lived. Her husband died in the year 558, without leaving an heir, consequently the whole monarchy of France was re-united under his brother Clotaire, whose first act of authority was to expel Ultrogothe and her daughters from the palace of Thermes; she was however afterwards recalled by his son and successor Cherbourg. During her exile she remained at Tours, near the tomb of Saint Martin; but on the invitation of Cherbourg she returned to Paris, and expired in the year 573, at the king's palace. Her daughters never married: they were interred by the side of their parents at Saint Germain-des-Prés.

QUEEN INGONDE.

(Reign of Clotaire I.)

INGONDE was the first wife of Clotaire I. She was of low extraction, but remarkable for her beauty and gentle disposition. She was honoured with the title of queen in the year 517, when Clotaire was only king of Soissons.

This queen had six children, the two first of whom died young; the other four were Cherberg, king of Paris; Goutran, king of Orleans; Sigibert, king of Austrasia; and Clodosinde, queen of the Lombards.

At this epoch, one of the greatest possible marks of distinction and superiority of rank was a plurality of wives, and the first race of French kings admitted of no difference between those whom they honoured with the title; all were wives, and all queens. The offspring of each took rank indiscriminately according to age, and the eldest son was heir to the throne of his father.

It was not unusual for the kings and most illustrious chiefs in those days, to choose partners from

amongst simple villagers, or even from their slaves and vassals. At a later period, the fundamental laws respecting marriage portions, and the exhortations of the clergy, who succeeded in inducing them to solemnize their unions by receiving a religious benediction at the altar, gave a more serious and august character to those who possessed the rank of queen ; nevertheless, the confusion of wives and children, caused by the system of polygamy which was pursued, did not cease until the reign of Charlemagne.

Ingonde was for some time the only wife of Clotaire I., who was passionately and exclusively attached to her, and granted her every desire she expressed ; consequently she became the medium by which many favours were obtained from the king. Her sister Aregonde being unmarried, Gregory, bishop of Tours, persuaded the queen to petition her husband to procure her a suitable alliance. The following is the Oriental style of language he used on the occasion :—" Le roi, mon seigneur, a fait ce que lui a plu de son esclave ; il l'a honorée de sa couche. . . . Je te supplie maintenant de mettre le comble à ses faveurs en donnant

à ma sœur Arégonde un mari dont le rang et le mérite puissent répondre à l'état brillant auquel j'ai été élevée par mon roi."

At the time of presenting this petition, Ingonde also presented Aregonde to Clotaire, who, thinking he could not better provide for her, offered her his own hand, and the espousals were concluded by his receiving her into his palace as wife and second queen. It is related that Ingonde was too amiable to murmur at his decision.

QUEEN AREGONDE.

AREGONDE gave birth to Chilperic, king of Soissons: shortly after this event, her conduct gave umbrage to the pope, John III., who would no longer permit her to remain at court, and obliged her to retire to a convent, where she assumed the veil.

QUEEN GONDINQUE.

GONDINQUE, who was the widow of Clodomir, Clotaire's eldest brother, replaced Aregonde, but

she died shortly after her union, leaving no posterity.

QUEEN CHUSENE, OR GONSINDE,

WAS Clotaire's fourth wife, but very little is known of her, except that she was the mother of the unfortunate Chramme, who was burned with his young wife and children, in his house, by order of his cruel father, for having contracted a marriage without his concurrence and maintained it by a revolt.

The precise time of the death of the four last-named queens is not known.

QUEEN RADEGONDE.

THIS queen was daughter of Berthaire, king of Thuringia, and she was cousin-german to Clotaire I. The latter, having taken an army into Thuringia for the purpose of revenging the injuries done to his house, gained a complete victory, and put to the sword all the family of Berthaire, with the exception of Radegonde, who, although related to

him, became his slave when eight years old. Historians relate, that at this tender age Radegonde was so beautiful, and her manners so graceful, that the conquerors were all desirous of possessing her; and in the division of the prisoners, to avoid bloodshed, they determined upon drawing lots to decide her destiny. The young captive became the property of Clotaire, who immediately conveyed her to the Château d'Athie in Vermandois, where, after having abjured paganism, she was educated with great care in the Christian religion; and on attaining her fifteenth year, Clotaire took her to Soissons, where she became his wife, in the year 538.

There was an ambitious policy blended with this marriage on the part of the king; for in virtue of it, the states of Thuringia were added to France. But whether Radegonde was too young to form an attachment for a man many years her senior, or, what is much more probable, entertained a just horror for the murderer of her father, and the author of all the misfortunes of her family, she displayed the utmost indifference towards her husband, and was in the habit of relieving her-

self from his attentions and society, by passing many days successively in the performance of religious duties and severe acts of penance. And at length, disgusted with the licentious conduct of the king, and yielding to her own inclination, she quitted the court three years after her marriage, and requested of Saint Medard, bishop of Noyou, permission to take the veil.

Notwithstanding this request was made without the consent or knowledge of the king, and was moreover contrary to the canonical laws, the prelate was induced to yield to the queen's solicitations, and granted her the monastic habit, on receiving which she proceeded to visit the tomb of Saint Martin at Tours ; but, learning that Clotaire was determined on retaking possession of her, she wandered for a long time from abbey to abbey for the purpose of concealment.

At length, reassured by the silence or neglect of the king, Radegonde settled at Poitiers, where she founded the celebrated abbey of Sainte-Croix, the first female monastery in France. During the building of this monastery, Radegonde lived as a recluse, in the society of a young girl called Agnes,

whom she had educated, and with whom she devoted herself to acts of religion. The stone flour-mill which this queen was in the habit of turning as a species of penance is reported to have been shown to strangers visiting Poitiers within the last century.

Although she had invariably assumed at court the appearance of a most humble and religious person, in her monastery she reigned as a queen ; and her husband Clotaire voluntarily supplied her with the means necessary for her expenditure. She attracted immense numbers of pilgrims to the convent, and all the wise and learned of the age paid homage to her. She possessed great influence throughout the country, although distant from Paris, the seat of government ; and she is even said to have mediated between sovereigns, and dissuaded them from waging war. All the unfortunate flocked to her, and her interest with Clotaire in making intercessions for those who appealed to her was very powerful.

Historians assert that Radegonde was passionately fond of poetry, and bestowed great favour and attention on the poet Fortunato ; a circum-

stance which, if true, could not fail to injure the reputation of a young queen, separated as she was from her husband. Fortunato was an Italian; he was amiable and intellectual, and frequently addressed Radegonde in verse, daily presenting her with fruits and flowers. She in her turn made him little presents; and though these simple gifts did honour to the frugality of the epoch, their interchange has thrown suspicion on the queen's virtue.

Agnes, the Lady Abbess of Sainte-Croix, often participated in the literary amusements of Radegonde and Fortunato, both of whom were in the habit of composing impromptu verses at table, some of which are preserved, and are very pleasing. In the collection of these pieces there is one relative to which an anecdote is told, to the effect that it was the result of an indulgence, anything but monastical, into which the poet was inveigled by his fair companions; and the verses but too plainly proclaim the condition of the author at the moment they were penned.

Although the Celtic was the language spoken in France, Radegonde wrote and conversed fluently in

the Roman tongue. Her letters to the Emperor Orient-Justin and the Empress Sophie are proofs of her talents and acquirements. With the exception of her will, all her works were written and corrected by herself, in conjunction with the learned Fortunato; and many poetical pieces were the result of this association. One in particular, the subject of which is the misfortunes and downfall of the house of her father Berthaire, is remarkable for dignity of style and sweetness of expression; and it unites the most tender expressions of affectionate regret with an energetic description of the ruin of Thuringia.

This fact goes far to explain the reason why Radegonde adopted at court the appearance of a penitent, and in the cloister that of a queen. She found herself happier anywhere than in the palace of him who was the author of all the sufferings of her family.

The king, whom Radegonde did not hesitate to declare that she detested, preceded her to the tomb in 562. She survived him twenty-eight years, and pursued during her widowhood the same mode of life which she had adopted on establishing herself at Poitiers. She died at the monastery of

Sainte-Croix in the year 590, aged sixty-seven, leaving no children.

Radegonde was buried by the celebrated Bishop Gregory, of Tours, in the vault of a church which bears his name. She was considered a prodigy for the age in which she lived, on account of her talents and accomplishments.

QUEEN WALDRADE.

CLOTAIRE, having added Thuringia to his other states by his marriage with Radegonde, was desirous of possessing the kingdom of Austrasia, by a union with Waldrade, daughter of Wachon, king of the Lombards, and widow of Thibaut, king of Austrasia, who was his grand-nephew. Waldrade was the sixth and last wife of Clotaire.

The clergy strenuously opposed these speculative marriages, and also the multiplicity of wives ; and Clotaire, having possessed himself of her kingdom, did not object to a divorce ; on the contrary, he assisted in persuading Waldrade to unite herself to Garibald, king of Bavaria. Nothing more is known of this queen.

QUEEN INGOBERGE.

(Reign of Cherberg.)

INGOBERGE was the wife of Cherberg, king of Paris, but her origin cannot be ascertained. She is called by some historians Nigebride. The king was so passionately fond of the chase, that he frequently neglected the queen to follow its pleasures. Ingoberge, who felt his indifference, confided her sorrows to two young girls who resided with her in the capacity of maids of honour; one of whom had escaped from a conventual life, which was displeasing to her, and the other possessed great personal attraction, and is said to have danced and sung well. They recommended the queen to invent some new kind of amusement to divert the king, and retain him in the palace. Accordingly she composed a pastoral romance, in which these young ladies performed a prominent part, and pleased the king so much that he could not restrain his admiration of them. The queen was very indignant, not only at her husband's infidelity, but also at his degraded choice, these girls being the daughters of a

wool-spinner ; and in order to humiliate him and disgrace her rivals, she ordered their father to come and perform his usual avocation of spinning in her apartments, and then conducted the king to witness him at his labour. The result of this stratagem was unfortunate for Ingoberge, against whom the king was highly incensed ; he immediately expelled her from the palace, in the year 561. She retired to a convent, where she passed the remainder of her life in prayers and charities, gave freedom to all the slaves on her estate, and died in 589, at the age of seventy, leaving one daughter, Bertha, who was married to one of the kings of Great Britain.

QUEEN MIROFLEDE.

MIROFLEDE, the eldest of the two sisters above named, was raised to the throne by Cherberg, on the expulsion of Ingoberge. But Marcouéve, the younger, who was ambitious of supplanting her sister, insinuated to the king that Mirofleda was intriguing with one of the Lords about the court—a malicious artifice which succeeded, and Mirofleda

in her turn was obliged to yield the royal post to her sister. She had no children.

QUEEN MARCOUÉVE.

THE clergy, who had permitted the deposition of Ingoberge, and the dismissal of Mirofledé, would not sanction the marriage of the king with Marcouéve, because she had broken her religious vows, and was moreover sister to the late queen. In consequence, Saint Germain, bishop of Paris, excommunicated Cherberg and Marcouéve. The latter died childless in the year 570.

QUEEN TEUDEGILDE.

CHERBERG, who was not to be intimidated by the thunders of the Church, married a third wife, named Teudegilde.

One day, having been engaged in his favourite sport, he lay down near a fountain to repose himself after the fatigues of the chase, when a young girl of extreme beauty approached. The prince

called her to him, and professed himself enamoured of her; but the shepherdess, although much gratified by his admiration, would not consent to listen to him, until he should consecrate his love for her at the foot of the altar. The king of France thereupon espoused the simple and obscure Teudegilde, who received the title of queen.

The reign of Teudegilde was short, for the king died the same year, 570. But Teudegilde was ambitious, and hoped to maintain her rank by a union with her brother-in-law, Goutran, king of Orleans. Accordingly she sent deputies, offering him her hand and her riches. The avaricious Goutran accepted both; but after possessing himself of her kingdom and wealth, he placed her in a monastery at Arles.

The queen, who could not endure the cloister, endeavoured to release herself from its rigours, and gained the friendship and aid of a Spaniard, to whom she promised all her jewels if he would effect her escape. But their project was discovered; the Abbess guarded the unhappy Teudegilde more strictly than ever, and treated her with inflexible rigour.

Despair shortened the days of this young and royal widow, who died of grief for the loss of her liberty, in the year 578.

QUEEN AUDOVERE.

(Reign of Chilperic I.)

DURING the reigns of the Merovingian race of kings, upon the death of each sovereign the sons divided the kingdom, the eldest being heir to the throne of Paris. This was a custom which created continual warfare, as well as the frequent dismemberment of the French territories. Such a system of division fortunately did not continue beyond the eighth century, having been abolished by the successors of Clotaire II.

At the death of Clotaire I., under whom all the states of France were united, the kingdom was again separated into the provinces of Soissons, Orleans, Burgundy, Austrasia, and Neustria. The wives of each of these sovereigns are as well known in history as that of their brother the king of Paris, but as none can rank amongst the queens of France

but those whose husbands possessed Paris for their seat of government, they are omitted in this history.

Audovere was first wife of Chilperic I., and daughter of a French duke; she was remarkable for her beauty and extreme simplicity. As a wife and mother she was faultless; but, devoid of those talents which are indispensable for a queen, either to assist her husband with her counsel or guard herself from private enemies, she soon fell a victim to the stratagems of one of her attendants, the celebrated Fredegonde, who was born at Montdidier, in 543, and who, although of obscure parentage, possessed talents which were unfortunately but too ill directed. At no period have the pages of history been sullied with more atrocious crimes than those which mark the career of this woman.

Her first act was a stratagem to separate Audovere from the king, doubtless with the view of replacing the queen herself. Audovere had at the time just given birth to her fifth child, when Fredegonde advised her to request the king to become sponsor for the newly-born infant, in conjunction with herself; assuring her that this would cause him to attach himself more closely to her, and would form a new

link of affection between them. Audovere had been carefully and religiously educated, and was ignorant of the many barbarous laws which still existed ; moreover she had too little foresight to suspect the designs of her perfidious counsellor.

Whether this was a plan concerted with Chilperic, or whether Fredegonde was the sole author, is uncertain ; but Chilperic, having become the godfather of his daughter, was instructed by Fredegonde to declare that as there existed between himself and the queen a *spiritual alliance*, to live longer together in the conjugal state would be a crime worthy of death : accordingly, under the pretext of a religious motive, Chilperic concealed his unworthy desire for a divorce. Audovere was sent, with her daughter Childesinde, to the Abbey du Pré, at Mons, where, in the year 580, Fredegonde caused them to be assassinated.

She had three sons and two daughters : one of her sons died young ; the other children, Morovee, Clovis, Childesinde, and Basine, fell victims to Fredegonde's hatred.

QUEEN GALSUINDE.

THE cruel and ambitious conduct of Fredegonde did not immediately procure her the position she aimed at obtaining ; for the king tenaciously maintained the resolution he had made to marry none but a princess, and refused her those public honours which were due only to a queen. Fredegonde was disappointed, but artful and intriguing she felt it necessary to submit, in order to proceed more surely along the path which was to lead her to the desired end.

Chilperic in proof of his determination invited Galsuinde, daughter of the king of the Visigoths, to share the throne of France with him ; but as the characters of Chilperic and Fredegonde were well known at foreign courts, the parents of this young Spanish princess hesitated a long time before they could persuade themselves to consent to this marriage, for which Galsuinde had a profound aversion, perhaps from a presentiment of the fate that was in preparation for her. But policy, which rules the destinies of royal children, assigned the

princess to Chilperic; her father, Aganathilde, thinking the union would be advantageous, resigned his daughter to the French ambassadors, whom he made swear by their swords, in the name of the King of France, that he would never suffer another woman to share his affections; and with a view of securing his kindness to her daughter, well knowing his avaricious disposition, her mother loaded her with immense riches.

Though less beautiful than her sister, Brunehaut,—whom it will soon be necessary to introduce into this history,—she was much more gentle, more regretted by her father's people, and lamented by her mother. Galsuinde became the victim of her father's political views, and entered upon her new honours with a foreboding of the snares which surrounded her.

She made her entry into France in a silver car, drawn by four white bulls; the marriage was celebrated with great magnificence at Rouen, and the king reiterated the oath of his ambassadors, swearing by the most holy relics that he would never marry another wife.

Galsuinde's riches gave her many charms in the

eyes of Chilperic, and it was believed that the superiority of her intellect and her sweetness of temper had fixed his volatile disposition. Loved and respected by the French people, she was proud of her virtue and her birth, and believed they were sufficient to oppose every title which Fredegonde might usurp. But Galsuinde, more clear-sighted than Audoverere, soon discovered that Fredegonde possessed unlimited power over the mind and heart of the monarch; and feeling her insecurity near so dangerous a rival, she threw herself on her knees before Chilperic, entreating him, as the greatest favour, to suffer her to return to the court of her father. Chilperic would perhaps have granted her request, but he must have returned the wealth which the Spanish princess had brought with her; his heart was too sordid to resign it, and her treasures were the cause of her ruin.

Galsuinde was strangled in her bed in 568, after a reign of two years, leaving no posterity.

QUEEN AND REGENT FREDEGONDE.

No page in these annals offers so deplorable a complication of evils as the period now referred to—an epoch in which two women made France the theatre of the most sanguinary acts, both of public warfare and private hatred.

Fredegonde's indefatigable manœuvres at length procured her the much-desired diadem. Her talents might have rendered her capable of reigning, had not her cruelties obliterated the glory of some wise and enterprising actions. Her resources for intrigue were most fertile, and Chilperic became the slave of her will; she sustained the weight of government with so much firmness, that, until she shared it with him, the king had never appeared so worthy of the throne; but the hatred and vengeance of a woman possessed of such art and unlimited power opened a wide field for the exercise of her cruelty, which she incessantly and unerringly practised for a series of years.

Brunehaut, or Brunichilde, Queen of Austrasia, second daughter of the King of the Visigoths, and

wife of Sigibert, had determined to be revenged on Fredegonde for the death of her sister Galsuinde. She was not less remarkable than Fredegonde for her talents, though she did not possess that queen's vindictive temper, or commit the crimes it produced. Brunehaut was considered the first woman of the age in which she lived.

Her sister's wrongs and death aroused her vengeance, and she excited her husband, Sigibert, King of Austrasia, to take up arms to avenge her quarrel in the year 569. Goutron, King of Orleans, joined him, and their combined forces vanquished Chilperic, whose people, burthened with taxes, abandoned him. Flying before his enemies, he took refuge in Tournai, where he enclosed himself with his wife and son, and resolved to perish beneath the ruins of the town rather than surrender. Fredegonde, although despairing, was not conquered; she promised great recompense to two young gentlemen of Thourenne if they succeeded in assassinating Sigibert, and numerous prayers if they fell in the attempt; a smile from this beautiful princess seduced them, they undertook the task, and the virtuous King Sigibert fell by the strokes of a

poignard, in the midst of his troops, in the year 575.

This crime saved Chilperic and his family.

Brunehaut, the widow of the murdered prince, and the implacable enemy of Fredegonde, offered her crown and wealth to the king, Chilperic, if he would marry her ; the offer was inviting, but Fredegonde, with her usual skill and cunning, parried this stroke to her power, and arrested the progress of her rival, who was detained at Rouen. It was in this town that Brunehaut married her nephew Merovee, son of Chilperic and Audovere. The marriage ceremony was performed by the Bishop Prétextat, who availed himself of this occasion to display his aversion to Fredegonde.

The young prince was the first victim ; Fredegonde sent hirelings who assassinated him in the arms of his bride. But that act did not satisfy her vengeance. She desired the punishment of Prétextat for having bestowed his benediction on this union. He was summoned before a council of bishops, and charged with having celebrated an incestuous marriage. The prelates discovered that the charge was an act of persecution, and acquitted

him; he was nevertheless banished from Paris by the absolute authority of Fredegonde, who, having once marked her victim, did not renounce her projects of vengeance.

Chilperic, finding himself without rivals, no longer cared to preserve the love of his subjects, whose discontent at length produced a revolt. Fredegonde, wishing to obtain the friendship of the French people, who regarded her with feelings of mingled horror and disdain, repealed all the new laws of taxation; but this act must be attributed more to fanatical superstition than to a desire to render justice.

Her two sons, Clodbert and Dagobert, were seized with an epidemic complaint, which her conscience attributed to the just wrath of Heaven, and for this reason she repealed these unjust taxes, and made vows to Saint Medard; but Providence rejected her compulsory sacrifice,—~~her~~ two sons died.

Fredegonde was inconsolable, feeling that after the death of Chilperic she would be without support, there being no lineal successor to the throne but Clovis, the last surviving son of Chilperic and Audovere. This imprudent young man had the folly to declare that he would avenge himself of the

enemy of his race, when she should fall into his power. From that moment Fredegonde determined to deprive him of such a satisfaction.

She first persuaded the king to send him to the Château de Braine, where a contagious epidemic was ravaging the neighbourhood; but Clovis returned safely and in health. She then accused him of loving the daughter of a sorceress, with whom she declared that he had laid plots for the destruction of her sons, Clodbert and Dagobert, by witchcraft. The unfortunate girl was shaved and beaten with rods; and her mother put to such cruel tortures, that, to escape from her agony, she avowed all that they desired; namely, that she was a sorceress, and that in conjunction with Clovis she had resolved the death of the young princes. The credulous king required no further proofs to induce him to abandon his son to the resentment of Fredegonde; accordingly this impious queen ordered Didier and Boson, two of the captains of her guard, to arrest him, and, after despoiling him of all his insignia of royalty and honour, caused his throat to be cut in the Château of Noisi, after which his body was thrown into the Marne, in the year 577. A fisherman, who

recognised the sad remains of this unfortunate young prince, drew the corpse from the river and procured it Christian burial.

His mother, Audovere, who was living in the retirement of the cloister, at the Abbey des Prés, and quite incapable of injuring Fredegonde, or of avenging her own wrongs, was nevertheless strangled by some of her satellites; the eldest daughter, Childesinde, shared the same fate; and the youngest, Basine, after experiencing great insult and outrage from these wretches, was left to preserve the memory of the atrocious affront in the monastery, where she died soon after.

Such was Fredegonde; and Chilperic was sufficiently cruel and stupid to look calmly on such horrors. All the property which had belonged to Clovis and Audovere was seized by Fredegonde. She had imbrued her hands in innocent blood, and then added injustice and covetousness to murder.

But the death of Clovis did not satisfy her; she next attacked her own blood.

She had promised the hand of her daughter, Rigouthe, to Récarède, son of the king of the Visigoths, in the year 582. The dower of this young

princess consisted of immense riches in money and jewels. Rigouthe left Paris with fifty chariots filled with silver and valuables, and escorted by four thousand men. Her wealth excited the cupidity of several noblemen; accordingly her escort was attacked and routed, and such of her treasures as were not taken by the Duke of Toulouse were taken by the guides, who completed the pillage of the equipages. The princess could not reach Spain, and was obliged to return to the court of Chilperic, without having contracted the projected alliance.

The return of this princess, whom Fredegonde disliked, was the subject of a new crime. They had lived at court on very bad terms, and the queen had provided her with a rich dower to accelerate the marriage of a daughter to whom she was not attached, and was desirous of ridding herself of.

With her usual subtlety, she feigned great sympathy and affection for Rigouthe, and conducted her into some secret apartments of the palace, where she pointed out to her a large chest filled with precious stones and valuable dresses, from amongst

which she invited her to choose those which pleased her most. Rigouthe bent forward to inspect the contents of the coffer, when Fredegonde, availing herself of a favourable moment, let fall the heavy cover upon the head of her daughter, who would have been suffocated had not one of her attendants gone to her assistance, and delivered her young mistress from her painful and perilous situation.

In the year 584 Fredegonde gave birth to Clotaire II.

Chilperic, having reason to suspect her fidelity, from the great favour and attention she bestowed on Landri of Tours, swore to punish them both. Fredegonde warned Landri of the circumstance, informing him that he must perish by Chilperic's command, or murder him. The same day this monarch was stabbed by Landri on his return from the chase, in the year 584, when he was sixty-one years of age.

From the circumstances attending this murder, the people of France suspected Fredegonde of having given an illegitimate successor to the crown, in the person of the young King Clotaire II.; but she took a solemn oath before several bishops and four

hundred witnesses that Clotaire was really the son of Chilperic.

To avoid the indignation of the people after the assassination of the king, she was obliged to place herself under the protection of Ragremode, bishop of Paris ; and, as churches and monasteries afforded an asylum to those who sought the shelter of their walls, Fredegonde shut herself up in the cathedral, with all her treasures. The bishop, who despised her, protected her only to preserve his privilege.

In the mean time, Gontran, king of Burgundy, and Chilberg, king of Austrasia, advanced towards Paris, the former with the view of usurping his late brother's kingdom, rather than to avenge his death ; and the latter, at the instigation of his mother, Brunehaut. Fredegonde's situation was most critical ; she was surrounded by enemies and hated by her own people ; moreover, Gontran, who had obtained possession of Paris, openly declared that he believed the young Clotaire to be the son of Landri of Tours, and should therefore take possession of his inheritance. Still she triumphed over her misfortunes.

Knowing the warm and generous disposition of

Gontran, she exercised her usual art to gain his pity, and at length induced him to take herself and her infant under his protection, as also to send back Brunehaut and Chilberg's ambassadors.

Thus protected, the queen had her young son baptized at Nanterre, and afterwards crowned at Vitri.

But though Gontran had taken the queen under his protection, he mistrusted her too much to suffer her to remain near his person, and accordingly sent her to the royal palace of Vaudreuil, near Rouen. Fredegonde, who felt convinced that this was the result of Brunehaut's counsel, despatched hired assassins to effect her murder. They were unsuccessful; and Brunehaut, to brave her enemy, sent back one of these miserable men to Rouen, whose hands the pitiless queen cut off, as a punishment for his want of skill.

During her residence at Vaudreuil the hour of her vengeance had arrived for the bishop Prétextat, who consecrated the marriage between Brunehaut and Morovee. On Easter Sunday, in the year 586, while engaged in his religious duties, the venerable prelate was stabbed by two assassins, and expired at the foot of the altar.

The death of Gontran, her protector, afforded Fredegonde an opportunity of exercising her capacity for governing, and displaying the inexhaustible talent and skill which she possessed.

Brunehaut, aided by her son Chilberg, had taken possession of several of the young king's most important fortresses. Fredegonde hastened to release them, and was met by a large army; she made up for the deficiency of her own force by skilful negotiations; reconciled the discontented by munificent promises; and succeeded in creating a quarrel between her enemies and the Britons, as well as exciting discord amongst the nobles of their court.

At length Fredegonde placed herself at the head of her troops, and led them on to battle. She presented her son to them, and harangued them in flattering terms, distributing presents amongst the officers. "En la voyant sourire avec tant de douceur, ils oublient que sa bouche ordonna souvent des forfaits. Idolâtres de cette reine éloquente et belle, tous jurent de défendre le jeune Clotaire jusqu'à la mort. Leur enthousiasme gagne les soldats, qui se pressent en foule sous les drapeaux de Fredegonde; elle-même, superbe Amazone,

s'élance à leur tête, accompagnée du vaillant Landri, fier de combattre pour son amante, et peut-être pour son fils."

The complete victory gained at Droissi, near Soissons, in 593, was the fruit of these wise arrangements. She was mistress of the field of battle, and shed much blood in pursuit of the enemy, ravaging the country as far as Rheims, after which she returned triumphant to Soissons.

Chilberg, who could not survive this inglorious defeat, died, leaving Brunehaut guardian of his children and regent of Austrasia; and thus two women, remarkable for their talents, courage, and cruelty, governed two neighbouring and powerful states.

Fredegonde marched with an army towards Paris to retake it; Brunehaut defended it; but the queen of France, always successful, gained a new victory over her rival at Leucofao, and by this means permanently established the throne of her son Clotaire II. After having divided her attention between his education and the administration of government, she died a natural death at Tours, in 597, aged fifty-four years.

In noticing the peaceful death of Fredegonde, we cannot omit to mention that of her rival, which occurred some time after ; and though Brunehaut's crimes must be regarded with horror, we shudder at the last catastrophe of her life, and the treatment she received at the hands of her nephew, the atrocious offspring of Fredegonde. Seated on a tribunal, surrounded by his chiefs, he caused Brunehaut, the daughter, wife, and mother of kings, who had been betrayed by one of her generals into his hands, to be brought before him. She appeared clothed in her royal mantle, and wearing the crown, with hatred and fury flashing from her eyes. The judge and murderer of the two sons of Thierry had the audacity to reproach his aunt with their death, as well as all her own crimes, and she was unanimously condemned. Bound on a camel, and covered with rags, she was led through the camp for three consecutive days, exposed to every species of ignominy and insult, and afterwards tied to the tail of a wild horse, who dashed her brains out, and dragged her mangled body over the rocks and stones. On comparing the frightful death of this woman with the tranquil end of Fredegonde, who

could for a moment doubt the certainty of a day of retribution in a future state?

Many comparisons have been made between these two furies, who, if they resembled each other in their lives, have left at least different reputations. With Fredegonde rests nothing but the memory of her crimes, whereas the name of Brunehaut, though it recalls crime, brings with it the recollection of celebrated foundations and useful establishments, such as the high roads which she cut through France, and which are still called "*Chaussées de Brunehaut* ;" but in acknowledging that these monuments give the queen of Austrasia some preference over her rival, we must admit that history does not produce two contemporary characters of the female sex so celebrated for crime as these two bad women.

Fredegonde was buried in the vault of Saint Germain-des-Prés at Paris, by the side of her husband Chilperic.

QUEEN HALDETRUDE.

(Reign of Clotaire II.,

DURING the reign of Clotaire II. France enjoyed some repose. His first wife, Haldetrude, is very little known; she was the mother of two princes, Dagobert I., king of France, who succeeded his father, and Merovée, who was taken prisoner at the battle d'Etampes, and put to death by order of Brunehaut.

Some historians assert that she was buried in the royal sepulchre at Saint Germain-des-Prés, others in Saint Peter's church at Rouen.

QUEEN BERTRUDE.

BERTRUDE, who succeeded her, was born at Neustria, and was of the house of Saxony. This queen was the object of love and respect to her husband and his subjects, on account of her amiable qualities.

The patrice* Aléthée, a prince of the house of Burgundy, conspired to usurp the throne of France,

* *Patrice*, a Roman title instituted by the emperor Constantine.

and, to effect his purpose, so artfully persuaded Lendemonde, bishop of Sion in Valais, that his success would be infallible, that he prevailed on him to pay a clandestine visit to the queen, and predict that the death of Clotaire would take place that year, offering her at the same time his episcopal town of Sion as a place of security for her person and property, and insinuating that a marriage with the audacious patrice would be the only means of preserving her crown.

Naturally simple and credulous, Bertrude was alarmed by this prophecy, and her constant anxiety for Clotaire's safety reduced her to a state of extreme melancholy and despair, by which means the king became acquainted with the conspiracy. The prelate retired to Sion, and obtained his pardon, but Aléthée was arrested and beheaded.

Bertrude died in the year 623, universally regretted, and was buried at Saint Germain-des-Prés. During a reign of eight years she had but one son, Aribert, who was king of Aquitain.

Clotaire had a third wife, named Sichilde; but nothing more is known of this princess than that, shortly after her marriage, having permitted some

familiarities to Boson d'Etampes, the king ordered him to be beheaded and sent Sichilde to a convent.

QUEEN GOMATRUDE.

(Reign of Dagobert I.)

DAGOBERT I., who succeeded his father, was not so good and simple a monarch as the popular traditions usually represent him. History informs us that he sullied his hands with more than one murder, and his favourites are too numerous to mention.

Gomatrude, sister to Bertrude, queen of France, was married to Dagobert three years before the death of his father Clotaire II.; the marriage was celebrated at Clichy in 624.

In 628 Dagobert divorced the queen, under the pretext of sterility, but perhaps really instigated by his own inconstant humour.

QUEEN AND REGENT NANTILDE.

BEING at vespers in the abbey of Romilly, Dagobert, who was sensibly affected by music, was so

charmed by the voice of one of the novices, that he insisted on seeing her. This was Nantilde, whom he withdrew from the convent and married.

Though the king possessed great attachment for his wife, he was none the less inconstant, having had as many as three favourites dwelling under the same palace-roof with the queen: their names were Raguetrude, Wulfragoude, and Berthilde. The former was the daughter of a nobleman of Blois, and was the mother of Saint Sigibert, king of Austrasia, born in the year 630.

In 634 Nantilde gave birth to Clovis II. Far from taking umbrage at the king's conduct, she contrived to preserve his regard, and maintained entire control over his mind. Feeling his strength and health decline, at the age of thirty-two, Dagobert assembled all his nobles at Saint Denis, and declared Nantilde regent, in conjunction with Ega, mayor of the palace.

During the life of this minister the queen directed the government with wisdom, but after his death, which took place at the royal château of Clichy in 641, Nantilde did not perform any act worthy of her regency, which, happily for France and her own

glory, lasted but a year after the death of her counsellor. She was buried at Saint Denis in 642, by the side of her husband Dagobert I.

QUEEN AND REGENT BATHILDE.

(Reign of Clovis II.)

THIS queen, who was of the blood royal of Saxony, was born in England in the year 635, and seized and borne from the coast during her youth by some corsairs, who sold her for a slave. The mayor of the palace, Erchinoald, struck with her beauty, bought her and presented her to his wife, who became attached to her on account of her gentle disposition, and introduced her at court. The young king, Clovis, expressed his admiration of the beautiful English girl; and the mayor of the palace, in order to preserve and strengthen his authority, gave Bathilde to Clovis, who, learning her noble descent espoused her A.D. 652. They were both seventeen years of age when the marriage took place.

The sudden elevation of Bathilde caused no alter-

ation in her gentle and amiable disposition ; her desire was to be beloved by all.

Her husband Clovis possessed a very weak mind, and abandoned himself so blindly to the greatest excesses that he died almost in a state of imbecility from the continual use of wine. He named Bathilde regent of France in 656.

This princess, animated by the wisest intentions, maintained peace and applied herself to the education of her children. She abolished slavery, and by her benevolent actions was universally beloved by her subjects. The celebrated Ebroïn, mayor of the palace, was her counsellor, but France attributed all the glory of the government to this good queen, whom they cherished and revered. "The nation," says the Jesuit Binet, "desired that she should be canonized while yet living."

Unfortunately the regent, fearing the ambitious designs of Ebroïn, abridged his authority by adding thereunto two prelates,—Seger, bishop of Autun, and Sigebrand, bishop of Paris. This division of power created opposition in the council, and the bishop of Paris, who was particularly attached to the queen and proud of her favour, made a boast

d it, and was shortly after assassinated by order of Ebroïn.

Bathilde was so deeply affected by the death of the bishop that she resolved on retiring to the abbey of Chelles.

At that period princesses and women of rank displayed great zeal for a monastic life, and it was usual for them to build or endow abbeys, even to the detriment of their children's fortunes and from the spoils of their vassals.

The queen, after taking the veil at Chelles, founded the abbey of Corbie, and several other convents.

Still good and beautiful, she did not hesitate to observe with the greatest humility all the rules in the convent of Chelles, and condescended to perform with her royal hands many domestic offices which were expected only from the inferior inmates.

She died in 680, aged forty-five years, and was buried at Chelles. She had three sons—Clotaire III., Childeric II., and Thierry I.—who were successively kings of France.

Pope Nicholas I. canonized Bathilde. “ L'âme rêveuse cherche encore, sous les ombrages de Chelles, la royale abbaye où d'augustes princesses, couvertes

d'une tunique bleue et d'un voile blanc, calmaient, par un repos solennel, le sang ambitieux de Clovis, qui se purifiait dans leurs veines."

Her eldest son, Clotaire III., never married.

QUEEN BLITILDE, OR BILICHILDE.

(Reign of Childeric II.)

THIS queen is known only by the catastrophe which terminated her days.

Her husband, Childeric II., though very young, was excessively cruel, and having been remonstrated with by Bodillon, one of his counsellors, respecting the injustice of a new tax, ordered his minister to be tied to a tree and beaten with rods. Bodillon swore to wash away the stain of this outrage on his name in the blood of the royal family: all the nobles partook of his indignation, and a conspiracy was soon formed. The king went to hunt in the forest of Livry, when Bodillon, after having insulted him, threw him down and murdered him; he then proceeded to the palace of the queen, whom, with her young son Dagobert, he stabbed. Her other

son, who miraculously escaped this massacre, was one of those ephemeral kings who reigned over France from this period till the time of Pepin-le-Bref.

Blitilde was twenty-three years of age at the time of her death, and was buried with her husband in the royal tomb of Saint Germain-des-Prés, at Paris.

Her coffin was discovered nearly a thousand years after (in 1646), containing her bones and fragments of apparel, which crumbled to dust shortly after the opening of the tomb.

QUEEN CLODOILDE.

(Reign of Thierry I.)

NEITHER the names nor histories of the wives of the last kings of the Merovingian race are known—Clovis III., Chilberg II., Dagobert II., Clotaire IV., Chilperic II., Thierry II., and Childeric III., all of whom died so young and reigned so obscurely that they have been called *les Rois fainéants*, in consequence of their slothful and insignificant career.

However, it is known that Thierry I., who preceded them, built the abbey of Waast d'Arras, where he was interred with Clodoilde, one of his wives, in 691, who was surnamed Dode, by some, on account of her great size, and by others Solinde and Cratilde ; she was the mother of Clovis III. and Chilberg II.

The other queens, until the epoch of the Carolingians, were no less obscure than their husbands, who relinquished their authority to the mayors of the palace, first the rivals of their power and afterwards its usurpers. The history of France, from the time of Clovis II. to the reign of Pepin-le-Bref, is entirely that of these ambitious dignitaries.

During this period the queens lived in retirement with their indolent husbands under the yoke of those barbarous manners which still existed, and in which their lords, by feudal right, made favourites of the wives and daughters of their vassals ;—miserable proof of the power of injustice and ignorance in a country not yet civilized !

CARLOVINGIAN RACE.

QUEEN BERTHA.

(Reign of Pepin-le-Bref.)

BEFORE his marriage with Bertha, Pepin had a wife called Leutberge, by whom he had three sons,—Rapaton, Bennou, and Blaman; and two daughters, Rathais and Ade, all of whom lived and died, like their mother, in obscurity.

Bertha, or Bertrada, daughter of Caribert, Count of Leon, was married to Pepin-le-Bref at the time that he was only mayor of the palace; but after his accession to the throne, the monarch, instigated by ambition or policy, was eager to contract a more brilliant alliance, and desirous of divorcing Bertha, who was surnamed *la Reine au grand Pied*, because she had one foot larger than the other. But the pope, Stephen III., who visited France at that period, succeeded in dissuading Pepin from his purpose, and the king and queen were solemnly crowned in 754, by the Roman pontiff, in the magnificent church of Saint Denis.

Bertha was the first queen of France whose coronation was consecrated by a prelate.

Haughty and of a violent disposition, she lived on very indifferent terms with her husband, whom she nevertheless accompanied in his battles in Germany and Aquitain.

Her renowned son Charlemagne had a high opinion of his mother's merits, and her influence over him was so great that she persuaded him to marry Hermengarde, the daughter of Didier king of the Lombards, against his will.

Under pretext of performing a pilgrimage, she took a voyage to Italy, and was received at Rome with great honours, having been the means of adding several of the king of Lombardy's possessions to those of the Pope.

Shortly after she proved the ascendancy she possessed over the mind of her son by the reconciliation she effected between the young princes Charlemagne king of Austrasia, and Carloman king of Neustria.

Bertha died at an advanced age at Choisi, in 783, after having reigned nine years, and was buried by the side of her husband at Saint Denis.

Besides Charlemagne and Carloman, she had also another son, called Gilles, and three daughters, of whom one, Gisele, was a nun; another, Rothaïde, was married to the Count d'Angers, and gave birth to the celebrated Rolando, who was killed at the Vale of Ronceveaux. The premature end of this young warrior, and the enthusiastic admiration which Charlemagne conferred on his family by his brilliant career, have given rise to so many tales of chivalry and romance, that it is difficult to distinguish the true history of this event from the fabulous; in the harmonious Italian language the name has been introduced by Ariosto in his sublime and inspiring poem entitled "Orlando Furioso."

QUEENS HERMENGARDE AND HILDEGARDE.

(Reign of Charlemagne.)

PREVIOUSLY to his accession, Charlemagne had married Galene, daughter of the king of Toledo, who died a few months after her marriage, leaving

with him only the memory of the beauty and graces which had won his devotion and love.

He afterwards married Himiltrude, who was divorced at the instigation of his mother Bertha, to give place to Hermengarde, in opposition to the advice of Pope Stephen III., who was a great enemy to her father, Didier king of Lombardy.

Himiltrude was the mother of Pepin-le-Bossu, or the Humpback. The epoch of her death is unknown.

Hermengarde, whom the king married out of respect to the will of his mother, was not long seated on the throne before Charlemagne expressed his determination to dissolve his union with her, and on this occasion the Pope favoured his intentions. The divorce was effected under the pretext that she was valetudinary and sterile. Didier took up arms to punish this affront, but his projects of vengeance failed before the prowess of Charlemagne. To add to her troubles, Hermengarde saw her father and her brother Adalgise despoiled of their crown in 774, and these accumulated misfortunes shortened the days of this queen, who died in retirement, the exact period being unknown.

Hildegarde, who succeeded this unfortunate queen, was the daughter of a prince of Swabia ; but although her reign lasted nine years, it affords nothing worthy of narration.

She was but twenty-six years of age at the time of her decease, and had nine children, five daughters and four sons. The youngest died the day following his birth ; the other three were kings, one of whom succeeded his father under the title of Louis-le-Débonnaire, or the Meek.

This princess was buried at Metz, in the Abbey of Saint Arnould, in 783, and carried to the tomb the regrets of the king and the nation.

QUEEN FASTRADE.

SHORTLY after the death of Hildegarde, Charlemagne married Fastrade, daughter of Raoul Count of Franconia. Her pride was so great that she treated the most powerful nobles with disdain, and caused daily increasing discontents, which Charlemagne, blinded by his love for Fastrade, attributed to disloyalty, and withdrew his affection from his subjects.

The king had disbanded his troops, and this opportunity was chosen for the formation of a conspiracy at Ratisbon, headed by Pepin-le-Bossu. A priest named Fardulfe, who had heard the particulars at the confessional, informed the king of the conspiracy, and the parties concerned in it were apprehended. Fastrade, who was naturally cruel, endeavoured to persuade Charlemagne to have Pepin executed, but the king had too much compassion to sacrifice his own offspring; he therefore commanded him to have his head shaved, and to be shut up in a monastery. The other conspirators were either beheaded or had their eyes put out, and Fardulfe was appointed Abbé of Saint Denis.

Some authors insinuate that Fastrade was concerned in this conspiracy; but it is very improbable, as by the death of Charlemagne, having no son, she would have lost the crown, and had therefore no interest in committing this crime; nevertheless her overbearing conduct made the king many enemies.

This queen died very young, at Frankfort, in 794, and was buried in the Abbey de Mayence at Saint Alban's, but, that abbey having been burnt to

the ground, her tomb was transferred to the cathedral of the same place.

She had two daughters, Hiltrude, Abbess of Faremoutier, and Theodrade, Abbess of Argenteuil.

EMPRESS LUITGARDE.

THIS beautiful princess was a German, and, though many years younger than the king, was much attached to him. Charlemagne was more fortunate in his sixth wife than in any of his former marriages; a contemporary writer describes her as “Admirable par sa parure, plus admirable par sa conduite et ses mœurs, généreuse, affable, et bien-faisante, aussi spirituelle que belle, elle aimait les arts, et s’appliquait à orner son esprit.”

Charlemagne was passionately fond of her, and in order to please this great prince, Luitgarde accustomed herself to the fatigues of the chase. She was a skilful equestrian, and, habited as an Amazon, intrepidly pursued the most ferocious beasts into the depths of the forest, always accompanying Charlemagne and his nobles in the autumnal hunts,

which took place in the woods of Ardennes and Vosges.

Charlemagne in 799 placed the iron crown upon his brow, and consequently the charming Luitgarde was the first princess who wore the double diadem, which united the dignity of queen of France with the pompous title of empress of Rome. But she did not long survive these honours, having died childless at Tours in 800, and was buried in the church of Saint Martin in that town.

Although the age of gallantry had not yet commenced in France, it was considered a post of honour to be a favourite of the king. Charlemagne had several mistresses, but the most beloved was Regine, who was presented to him by her uncle, Ganelon, the count of Mayence, with a request that she might be received in the rank of maid of honour to the empress. Charlemagne attached himself to Regine, and had two sons by her—Drogon, bishop of Metz, and Hugh the Abbé,—and a daughter named Adalinde.

He had also Adelvide, mother of Thierry, in 810; Madelgarde, who gave birth to Rothilde, in 812; and Gersuinde, who had a daughter named Hadel-

trude. It was to the first-mentioned of these favourites that the emperor gave such great proofs of tenderness, that he covered her with caresses for several days after her death, and enclosed himself in the room with the corpse even while in such a state of corruption that no person could endure to remain near it, and was at length with the greatest difficulty withdrawn from this object of immoderate idolatry by the archbishop of Cologne.

EMPRESS HERMENGARDE.

(Reign of Louis I.)

THIS princess was daughter of Ingram, count of Hasbay, and first wife of Louis-le-Débonnaire, with whom she was crowned at Rheims by Pope Stephen IV., in 816. She had been married to him eighteen years before his accession, and was remarkable for her numerous graces of person and mind. Her death, which took place at Angers two years after she received the title of empress, caused the emperor and the nation deep regret. She was the mother of three kings, Lothaire, Louis,

and Pepin, the eldest of whom reigned over a part of France.

EMPRESS JUDITH.

IN the excess of his grief for the loss of Hermengarde, Louis I. declared his resolution to renounce the world and assume the monastic garb; he however soon became reconciled to the death of his cherished partner, and from a religious motive determined to remarry. As soon as this resolution was formed, all the noble women in the empire assembled at Aix-la-Chapelle, the residence of the emperor, and endeavoured to outvie each other in attraction. Louis attentively examined each, and without being acquainted with either the quality of her birth or her disposition, made choice of the most beautiful, which was Judith, daughter of Welf, duke of Bavaria and count of Rawensberg; this ill-judged decision brought with it its evil consequences, for Louis, though scrupulously attentive to his religious duties, was a very weak prince, and naturally serious and timid. Such a character was not calculated to please a woman who united great

spirit with coquetry and beauty. The marriage was celebrated in 819 at Aix-la-Chapelle, and fortunately for Judith, she had the art to appear faithful in the eyes of her husband, who remained ignorant of her profligacy, though it was well known to the whole of France.

The queens of France were charged with all the expenses of the interior of the palace, having arrogated to themselves that power, and were the depositaries of all monies destined for the payment of the troops. At this period the young and handsome Bernard, count of Barcelona and duke of Septimanie, was at the court of Louis, and Judith obtained for him the situation of chamberlain, which comprised the functions of minister of finance and comptroller of the imperial household ; thus the empress introduced the young minister into her own especial department, and charged him with all her duties. Louis approved of all she did, although the nation could not close their eyes upon her misconduct. In 831, Judith, to the great delight of the emperor, gave birth to Charles-le-Chauve, or the Bald.

From this time the ambitious princess, seconded

by the chamberlain, incessantly occupied herself with endeavours to aggrandize this cherished son, to the injury of the king's elder children, and Louis was weak enough to proclaim Charles king over a portion of his states. Lothaire, Pepin, and Louis, the sons of Hermengarde, perceiving themselves despoiled of their inheritance, revolted, and many of the principal nobles about the court, whom Louis had loaded with favours, joined them in taking up arms to dethrone the monarch.

The young favourite had neither sufficient talent nor energy to dissipate the storm, but was cowardly enough to abandon his mistress, and his prince whom he had doubly betrayed, in their difficult position. Judith, not less feeble, retired to the monastery of Laon, where she was arrested by Pepin, who sent her back to her husband, after he had obtained her promise to take the veil, and to exercise her influence over Louis to determine him to abdicate the throne. The empress did not keep her promise, which, drawn from her by force, ceased to exist with the violence which had dictated it. She was constantly surrounded by spies, but nevertheless contrived to persuade the king to refuse

his abdication on account of the young prince Charles.

Louis consented to act according to his wife's wishes ; but the princes, on learning his resolution, conducted him to Saint Medard in Soissons, and again made a prisoner of the empress, whom they confined in the royal monastery of Saint Radene-gonde in Poitiers, and who on her departure was overwhelmed with the deserved reproaches and insults of the populace. In order to induce Louis to abdicate the throne, the princes informed him that Judith and her infant son had fallen victims of grief for her misfortunes ; but a monk named Gombaud, who had engaged to instruct the king in the rules of the monastic life, informed him of the deception. Accordingly the king entered into a negotiation with his rebel sons, but the people, who had gained nothing by the disorders, and who had compassion for their ill-used and legitimate sovereign, replaced him on the throne by universal consent.

Louis had not courage to punish the offenders, but he was hardly re-established when he thought of withdrawing Judith from her captivity, and although she had taken the vows, declared them null,

in consequence of her religious engagement having been forced upon her; and the empress returned triumphantly to his palace.

None of the reports respecting her disgraceful conduct with Bernard made the least impression on the mind of Louis, who believed her innocent, and was desirous that his subjects should be of the same opinion. Consequently, according to the custom of the times, Judith, magnificently dressed, appeared before a public assemblage at Aix-la-Chapelle, and pronounced an oath declaring her innocence; her parents made the same solemn declaration, and the empress herself offered to submit to the proof by fire, from which she came out victorious*. The charlatans of the present day are

* The proof of innocence by fire consisted in causing the accused to walk slowly over red-hot ploughshares, or to hold the hand for a certain length of time in an iron gauntlet which had been heated in a furnace, without receiving any injury.

Another proof of innocence was to come safe and unharmed out of a caldron of boiling water, after remaining in it a determined space of time.

Those who submitted to the proof by cold water were plunged, well manacled, into a deep pond or vat of water; if the accused floated he was considered innocent, if he sunk he was pronounced guilty, for it was imagined that Providence would perform a miracle rather than suffer the innocent to be punished.

There was also the proof of the cross, which consisted in holding

better acquainted with the worth of these proofs of guilt or innocence than the nobles who were contemporaries of Judith! After this circumstance, though no person offered to fight her accusers in close combat, the reports were pompously declared to be calumnious, and the empress had sufficient influence to procure the banishment of the celebrated Vala, abbot of Corbie, one of the principal persons concerned in the sedition.

During her seclusion, Judith had been incessant in her intrigues for her son, and the veil had only served to conceal her manœuvres, so that upon her reinstatement she had the happiness of seeing him crowned and acknowledged king of Aquitaine, by the princes who were the chiefs of the conspiracy to dispossess him.

The duke of Septimanie also returned, and offered to prove his own and the empress's innocence in close combat, but no one accepted the defiance.

the arms extended for some time : those who let them fall first lost their cause.

These, and several other proofs less common and equally ridiculous and extravagant, were performed in the church, in presence of priests and persons of rank, and accompanied with prayers and religious ceremonies, which gave them a sacred character.

Bernard did not however resume his office, his place having been filled by Gombaud, who was more useful to the sovereign.

At length the princes by the first marriage, who had been forced to yield to necessity, reunited their forces, and once more revolted. Pope Gregory IV., in defiance of the courageous opposition of all the French bishops, entered France at the head of this league, which was much more prudently conducted than the former, and the unfortunate monarch was a second time robbed of his crown, and again conducted to the abbey of Saint Medard, in 833 ; the prince Charles was sent to the abbey of Pruym in Prussia ; and Judith, after having her head shaved, was confined in the abbey Tortona in Lombardy.

But the same circumstances and the compassion of the people re-established the emperor upon his throne a second time, although the crown had less attraction for him than his reunion with the unworthy wife he loved. Judith returned to court and became more powerful than ever. His constant griefs had materially injured the health of the emperor, and she became anxious to secure the succession to her son, before his death should take

place. She first intrigued so artfully with Lothaire, and after his death with Pepin king of Aquitaine, that she managed to obtain the crown for him, and he succeeded his father in the government of France under the title of Charles-le-Chauve.

Judith was so well acquainted with the authority she possessed over her weak-minded husband, that she followed him to Aquitaine in 838, fearing lest the sight of Pepin's children, robbed of their inheritance, should make an impression on his heart which would incite him to favour their prospects.

She persuaded the monarch, who was ill and feeble, to march against his son, Louis-le-Germanique, in the middle of winter, which unfortunate expedition caused his death in 840.

All the policy of the empress could not prevent a terrible struggle, of which she was the cause, between the sons of Louis-le-Débonnaire; and in 841 much blood was spilt at Fontenay. At length, in 843, she succeeded in adjusting the differences between the brothers, by dividing the monarchy amongst them, and in the same year died at Tours, aged eighty.

There have been few princesses in France more

artful and intriguing than Judith, and few who have displayed greater perseverance, or obtained greater success.

EMPRESS HERMENTRUDE.

(Reign of Charles II.)

HERMENTRUDE, the first wife of Charles-le-Chauve, was the daughter of Eude I., count of Orleans; and although married at Crecy in 842, she was not crowned until four-and-twenty years later, on account of the troubles that agitated France. This event took place at Soissons in 866.

To this princess is to be attributed the definitive reconciliation of Charles with his brothers Lothaire and Louis-le-Germanique; she was also the means of reviving a good understanding between the king and his sister, the queen of Lombardy.

Hermentrude, worthy of a better fate, did not long enjoy the glory to which such amiable conduct entitled her; she did not even possess the affection of her husband, who was attached to Richilde, afterwards his wife, and for whose sake Hermentrude was treated with the utmost disdain. He

would even have repudiated the unhappy queen, had he not dreaded the public indignation which would have followed so unjust an action.

This empress died at St. Denis in the year 869, where she was buried. She left a numerous posterity, amongst whom were Louis-le-Bègue, or the Stammerer, king of France, who succeeded his father, and Charles king of Aquitaine, two sons who were monks, two daughters who took the veil, and a third, Judith, who was successively wife to two kings of England.

EMPRESS AND REGENT RICHILDE.

THREE months after the death of Hermentrude Charles II. married Richilde, daughter of Berves, count of Ardennes, and sister to Boson I., duke of Burgundy and king of Provence. This marriage was celebrated at Aix-la-Chapelle in 870.

The early part of her reign contains nothing worthy of note ; but at the expiration of seven years the emperor conducted the beautiful Richilde to Italy, where, on being proclaimed empress, Pope

John VIII. placed the iron crown upon her head, in the cathedral of Tortona.

Besides her great beauty Richilde possessed a firm mind, and when Charles was 'about to undertake an expedition against his brother Louis, king of Lombardy, he considered her capable of holding the reins of government ; he therefore left the affairs of the state under her control, and if this regency was not so successful as might have been expected, it must be attributed to the unskilful management of Charles in Italy, for he gave his enemy such opportunities of advantage that Louis penetrated into France.

The empress, who was at Heristal when the intelligence of her husband's defeat arrived, had but just time to escape ; and the night after her departure gave birth to an infant, whom she left with a faithful servant, and continued her flight, notwithstanding her condition.

The emperor's affection for his wife never diminished ; he rendered her the greatest honours, but some historians affirm that she was totally unworthy of such attachment, having conspired against the life of her husband : this charge, however, is not proved,

although her brother, Boson, participated in the plot: nevertheless Richilde's conduct after the death of Charles-le-Chauve, who was poisoned in 877 by his medical attendant, a Jew, gives some foundation for the report. She led so licentious a life during her widowhood that Foulques, the archbishop of Rheims, menaced her with the most terrible ecclesiastical anathemas if she did not put some restraint upon her conduct. This prelate reproached her with having given herself up to all sorts of excesses, pillaging and setting fire to houses in the midst of the most disgraceful orgies.

Age produced no change in the conduct of this empress, who, in the year 890, terminated her disgraceful career in an obscure village, after having lost all her children by Charles-le-Chauve.

EMPRESSES ANSGARDE AND ALICE,

OF ENGLAND.

(Reign of Louis II.)

WHEN but seventeen years of age Louis-le-Bègue, or the Stammerer, formed a clandestine marriage

with Ansgarde, daughter of the Count Hardouin, and maid of honour to Richilde. In consequence of this union having been formed without the knowledge of the king his father, who was greatly irritated, the young and affectionate pair were condemned to a separation, although Ansgarde had two sons by Louis, Louis III. and Carloman, who reigned after their father.

Not content with this forced separation, Charles-le-Chauve compelled Louis to marry Alix or Adelaide of England, for the purpose of setting aside the claims of the children by the first marriage.

After the death of Charles-le-Chauve, Ansgarde, whose marriage had been celebrated fifteen years before, appealed to Louis to proclaim her rights and those of her children.

Hinemar, archbishop of Rheims, and the Pope, John VIII., decided this difficult cause, and pronounced in favour of Ansgarde, who was acknowledged empress, because Charles did not appeal to the Ecclesiastical Court to proclaim the divorce, and Louis, who had never ceased to love Ansgarde, was willing to be reunited to her.

His second wife, Alice, who was the victim of

these manœuvres, gave birth to Charles-le-Simple five months after the king's death.

Neither of these princesses were crowned, Louis's reign having lasted but one year, and the time and place of their death is not known.

Louis-le-Bègue fearing that his double marriage would create discordance amongst his sons, named Louis III. and Carloman his joint successors ; but the reign of these princes was very short, and in no annals is there mention of their wives or posterity.

Some historians have named Engelberge, daughter of the duke of Spoleto, as the wife of Louis, but it is very doubtful whether any such marriage took place. After the emperor's death Engelberge quitted the court, and spent the remainder of her life in the convent of the Benedictines of St. Sixte, in Plaisance ; she died in the year 890.

EMPRESS RICHARDE.

(Reign of Charles III.)

RICHARDE, daughter of a Scottish king, was the wife of Charles-le-Gros, or the Fat, and was married in the year 877.

This monarch, who was equally unworthy of the crown he wore and incapable of supporting its burthen, became still more enfeebled by retirement and fasting ; so that some of his ambitious nobles, who were desirous of the post, insinuated that Luitgard, bishop of Verceil, his prime minister, had some culpable connection with the empress.

Naturally jealous, the feeble monarch soon believed what he feared ; Luitgard, in whom he had great confidence, was expelled from the court, and Richarde traduced before a tribunal of nobles, in 887. Richarde protested her innocence, and demanded that it might be proved by close combat, or by fire and water ; nevertheless the divorce was pronounced, and the empress was obliged to retire to the monastery of Audelman in Alsace, which she had herself built and richly endowed.

Richarde lived there ten years, and died in 897. Her reputation for wisdom and virtue was very great, though she refused the appeal of her unfortunate husband, who had been dethroned by his discontented subjects, abandoned him when he was homeless and helpless, and he would in all probability have died of starvation had he not been relieved by his old minister Luitgard.

QUEEN FREDERUNE.

(Reign of Charles IV.)

SOME historians assert that Charles-le-Simple had a wife before Frederune, but her name is not known; all that can be said of her is that she had a daughter called Gisele, who married Rollon duke of Normandy. The name of Frederune's father cannot be ascertained, but she was sister to the bishop of Chalons-sur-Marne; at her marriage the king gave her the two royal palaces of Corberry and Pontgoin. Whatever merit this princess possessed, she could not bestow upon her husband the energy and activity necessary to command, and in the reign of Charles-le-Simple the imperial crown was lost to the kings of France; the debilitated descendants of Charlemagne were overthrown, and several usurpers divided this great empire.

Frederune lived in calm retirement, and her obscure existence would be unknown but for the religious edifices she founded, and the four daughters she had by this indolent monarch. She died in the year 917, and was buried in the cathedral at Rheims.

QUEEN ODIVE, OR OGIVE.

ODIVE, daughter of Edward king of Kent and granddaughter to the king of England, was called to replace Frederune on the throne, and had many occasions of employing the rare talents with which she was endowed. In 923 her husband, Charles-le-Simple, was taken prisoner in a battle with Hugh-le-Grand, count of Paris and duke of France; and to avoid captivity Odiva retired to the court of her brother Aldestan, grandson to Alfred the Great of England, taking with her Louis d'Outremer, her young son.

In 924 she received intelligence of the death of the unfortunate Charles her husband, and occupied herself with endeavouring to re-establish his dynasty upon the throne of France. Raoul, duke of Burgundy, had taken possession; but having died without posterity, Odiva used every effort to have her son recalled, and attached the all-powerful duke of Normandy to her interests. At length, after thirteen years' exile, her honourable efforts were crowned with success; and the French people sent deputies to England to bring back their sovereign Louis IV., whom they received with great joy.

In order to secure for her son the most powerful allies, Odiva remained in England until Louis had attained his eighteenth year, when he sent for his mother, whose counsels he thought would be profitable to him.

By a singular fatality, Odiva, though somewhat advanced in years, became attached to Herbert, count of Vermandois, second son to the count who had made the king her husband prisoner at Perron, where he died. Louis, fearing that evil consequences might arise from his mother's attachment to a prince who was the irreconcilable enemy of his house, watched her with so much vigilance that she considered herself almost a prisoner at Laon. At length, in 951, she escaped from her guardians, and this widow and daughter of a king, at the age of fifty years, married the young Herbert of Vermandois, who was only twenty; this marriage was solemnized at Saint Quintin. The king was so dissatisfied with the union, that he deprived his mother of the revenues she had so long enjoyed—an act of great ingratitude, as to the careful education this princess bestowed on him he owed not only his accession to the throne, but the reputation of being one of the wisest and most skilful princes of his time.

Odiva found consolation in a happy though disproportioned marriage; she added the care and affection of a mother to the tenderness and love of a wife, and in the first year of her union gave birth to Stephen, count of Troyes. Her next accouchement was less fortunate, and in giving birth to Agnes of Lorraine, she died in the arms of her young and fond husband, in the year 953.

QUEEN EMINE.

(Reign of Raoul.)

DURING the captivity of Charles-le-Simple, and the exile of Odiva and her young son, Louis IV., Raoul, duke of Normandy, took possession of the throne of France. His wife was Emine, daughter of Robert, duke of France, and sister of Hugh-le-Grand, and was crowned at Rheims with her husband in 933. Emine possessed excellent qualities and great talents, but she was ambitious and fond of rule.

The Count Herbert having threatened to take possession of Laon, one of the strongest fortresses in France, Emine, in the absence of Raoul, entered the town, and so vigorously prepared for defence, that the count would not venture to make the attack, fearing

to be vanquished by a woman, and retired without striking a blow. Raoul, who knew the ambitious character of his wife, and who, when firmly established on the throne, was desirous of governing alone, placed some restraint upon her power, which rendered the proud Emine so unhappy that she died shortly after, aged thirty-three, in 934. Her only son, Louis, died before his mother.

QUEEN GERBERGE.

(Reign of Louis IV.)

THIS princess was married to Louis d'Outremer, or "from beyond sea," in 939, under the following circumstances:—Louis was pursuing his enemy, Gislebert, duke of Lorraine, who was drowned in attempting to swim with his horse across the Rhine. The Duchess Gerberge, his widow, vigorously defended her fortress in the country of Liege; Louis raised the siege, and possessed himself of the town, but conceived such a high esteem for her intrepidity that he asked her hand in marriage, and obtained it in 940. Gerberge was daughter of the emperor of Germany, Henry I., surnamed l'Oiseleur, or the Fowler.

In all his difficulties Louis found in Gerberge

not only a companion in his toils, but all the intellect, activity, and courage of an intelligent and devoted counsellor. Her husband having been taken prisoner by the Normans in 945, she shut herself up in a fortress, which she refused to surrender till the various negotiations she had undertaken for his release were effected. She demanded succour from her brother Othon without success; she appealed to Hugh, who could have procured his liberty, but he did not heed her, or retained Louis prisoner under frivolous pretences; Gerberge also sought the assistance of the king of England: she did not, however, procure her husband's liberation till the expiration of a year, and that after Hugh had extorted from her a promise to surrender Laon. In all these reverses and disappointments she conducted herself with dignity and firmness.

But Louis having a second time undertaken a disastrous enterprise, was again reduced to the same extremities. Accordingly Gerberge confined herself in the tower of Rheims, which she fortified, and while the work necessary for the fortification was in progress, gave birth to a son. Hugh-le-Grand, astonished at so much bravery and energy, for which he felt the greatest respect, demanded a conference with the queen, and offered peace in

952, which she accepted, and sustained the rights and dignities of the government with great firmness.

She succeeded in reconciling the discontented nobles, who sided sometimes with Louis and sometimes with Hugh, creating a direct quarrel between these rivals, which she appeased, aided by her sister Hedwige, wife of Hugh, and thus re-established calm in France. The people blessed the name of this good queen, who gave birth to twin princes in the year 954, at the time Louis lost his life through a fall from his horse.

The position of the queen was critical after the death of the monarch, as Hugh-le-Grand became the arbiter of the fate of the royal family. Gerberge sent ambassadors to him entreating his support, and Hugh, though ambitious, possessed a generous spirit; he hastened to her, consoled her with the promise of assistance, and declared that his own arm should maintain the succession of the throne of France to her sons; and though he could easily have possessed himself of it, was contented with the glorious title of First Lord of France, and Protector of the Kings; in consequence of which Lothaire, Louis' eldest son, was proclaimed king of France in 954.

During the reign of her son, this wise princess directed the affairs of state, and by her excellent counsel prevented the fall of the reigning house for some years. Her death, which took place in 969, caused general regret. She was buried at Rheims, where she terminated her glorious career.

Gerberge had but one son by her first marriage, Geoffrey-à-la-Barbe, duke of Brabant; and five by her marriage with Louis IV., of whom the eldest, Lothaire, was king of France. She had also four daughters, amongst whom were Matilda, wife of Conrad king of Burgundy, and Hermentrude, who was married to a German prince.

QUEEN AND REGENT EMMA.

(Reign of Lothaire.)

To procure a powerful ally, Lothaire married Emma, daughter of Lothaire king of Italy, and of Adelaïde of Burgundy, who was afterwards wife of Othon emperor of Germany. The marriage was celebrated at Cologne, and like all political unions was unfortunate. In 986 her husband, Lothaire, was poisoned, and Emma was accused of the crime, which she denied, and, as proof of her innocence, remarked that, as by Lothaire's death she would

lose her crown, she could have no interest in committing that act. She also wrote letters to her mother, protesting that the death of the king was the greatest calamity that could have befallen her.

It is, however, a well-substantiated fact, that Emma had many criminal intrigues—above all, with Adalberon, bishop of Laon, a very depraved prelate, but remarkably clever and intellectual. This intimacy, of which the king was ignorant, added to the desire of governing France in her son's name, give just reason for suspecting these letters to have been more probably specimens of eloquence written to conceal her crime, than the sincere expressions of sorrow.

By an assemblage at Rheims the regency was conferred on Emma, who owed this power to the efforts of Adalberon.

Her son, Louis V., was nineteen years of age when Lothaire was murdered; his father had taken the precaution of having him crowned two years before. This prince was of a violent disposition, and perceiving that his mother's interference and conduct were injurious to the affairs of state, attacked Adalberon's episcopal town, and drove him from it, on account of his disorderly life.

Louis even threatened to arrest his mother

Emma, if she continued her licentious course of life; but before he could carry his project into execution he was poisoned, in 987, when in his twentieth year. It is doubtful whether it was Louis the Fifth's own wife, Blanche of Aquitaine, or Emma, who committed this murder; they were each equally capable of it. The death of this young prince extinguished the Carlovingian race, and left the field open for Hugh Capet.

Emma and Adalberon were arrested by order of the duke of Lorraine, uncle to the king of France, and confined in the same prison, where they were treated with great rigour. The queen sued for the protection of her mother, the empress of Germany, and her sister, the empress of Rome, in vain; and the clergy as vainly threatened the duke of Lorraine with the thunders of the church: he would grant no indulgence to his prisoners, until at length Emma effected her escape in 988; but she gained nothing beyond liberty. A miserable wanderer, often without an asylum, forgotten, and abandoned to the greatest misery, she died in an obscure spot the name of which is unknown, in that state of degradation which her conduct so richly merited, in the year 989.

QUEEN BLANCHE OF AQUITAINE.

(Reign of Louis V.)

SOME authors affirm that Blanche of Aquitaine was daughter of a king of Navarre, or of Rothbault, count of Arles; but she is more generally considered to have been the daughter of a nobleman of Aquitaine. The obscurity respecting the death of the last Carolingian, and the contradictory opinions entertained by historians, leave the exact facts undetermined; nevertheless it is certain that Queen Blanche was as depraved as her mother-in-law, Emma, and that like her, in 987, she was accused of having poisoned her husband, Louis V. Probably Blanche despised her husband, who was narrow-minded and violent; but there exists no proof of murder against her, and it is less likely that she was the author of the crime than that Louis fell a victim to his mother's vengeance, having determined to confine her for her irregular conduct.

Louis and Blanche were an ill-assorted pair: she was animated, intellectual, and spirited; the king, on the contrary, was inert and indolent, and sometimes even retired to a country residence to be released from her vivacious manners, which annoyed

him. Blanche attached herself to Godfrey, count of Verdun, and afterwards to Adalberon, when the former, enraged and jealous, proclaimed her inconstancy. It was on this occasion that Louis ended his days by poison; and Blanche, if innocent on that point, was nevertheless criminal on others. Anxious to preserve the crown, she obtained a declaration from her dying husband that Hugh Capet should be his successor, on condition that he would marry his widow.

After the death of her husband she, however, resolved to sacrifice for a time the enjoyment of the crown, which she had disposed of, preferring to marry Hugh Capet's young son, Robert, with the view of recovering the diadem on some future day. But her designs were frustrated, Blanche having died childless in 989, before Hugh Capet's death had left the throne of France vacant for his son Robert.

CAPETIAN RACE.

QUEEN ADELAÏDE.

(Reign of Hugh Capet.)

ALTHOUGH Adelaïde, the second wife of Hugh Capet, was the maternal branch of that race of the kings of France to which the Bourbons succeeded, her origin is uncertain. Some historians say that she was sister to Emma, queen of France, and daughter of the king of Italy; but the most prevalent opinion is that she was the daughter of William III., duke of Guyenne.

This queen, who founded the monastery of Saint Frambault at Senlis, and established a hundred Benedictine nuns at the Abbey of Argenteuil, which she richly endowed, died in 989, shortly after her husband's coronation, leaving one son, Robert, who succeeded his father as king of France; and three daughters, Adwige, Adelaïde, and Gisele, who married the counts of Hainault, Nevers, and Ponthieu.

Hugh Capet had also a son called Josselin, who was archbishop of Bourges, and one of the most learned prelates of his time, but the name of his mother is unknown.

QUEEN BERTHA.

(Reign of Robert.)

BEFORE his union with Bertha, Robert had married Rosule, daughter of Berenger, king of Italy, and widow of Arnould, count of Flanders, but the circumstances of the marriage are so little known that few authors recognise it. Bertha was daughter of Conrad I. king of Burgundy, and Matilda of France, and widow of Eudes, count of Chartres, and was married to her cousin Robert in 996. The union, though one of affection, was very unfortunate. According to the laws of the church then in vigour, a marriage of two persons, between whom there existed what was called a *spiritual alliance*, was not permitted. Robert had stood godfather at the baptismal font for one of Bertha's children by her first marriage, and this rendered them *spiritually allied*.

Abbon, abbot of Fleury, was opposed to the celebration of the nuptials, but his efforts to prevent it having been fruitless, he appealed to the court of Rome, as at that time the Popes exercised unbounded sovereignty. Robert omitted to request a dispensation from Pope Gregory V., which would have insured his alliance, but this neglect wounded

Gregory's pride, and he excommunicated the erring pair, as well as those members of the Church who had authorised the union. The execution of this sentence was opposed to the rights of the French people; and the king and queen, who were tenderly attached, and dreaded the dissolution of a bond which formed their happiness, appeared indifferent to the thunder of Rome, and refused to submit.

Gregory V. assembled a council, before whom he pronounced the marriage between Robert and Bertha, incestuous and null; fulminated an anathema upon Archambaud, bishop of Tours, who gave the nuptial benediction, condemned him to seven years of penitence, and placed the kingdom under an interdict until the king should dismiss Bertha. At this period, ignorance and superstition reigned in France, and to know how to write was an extraordinary mark of learning; so that in this state of barbarism the people trembled before the power of the pontiff.

According to the law published by Pepin le Bref at the Council of Verberie, in 755: "Un excommunié ne devoit pas entrer dans l'église, ni boire ni manger avec les autres Chrétiens. Sachez," said the holy fathers, "dont le roi n'est ici que l'organe, qu'aucun ne peut ni boire ni manger avec lui ni

recevoir ses parens, ni lui donner le baiser de paix, ni se joindre à lui dans la prière, ni le saluer ; et si quelqu'un communique avec lui de plein gré, qu'il sache qu'il est excommunié lui-même."

The execution of interdiction consisted in closing the churches, refusing the sacrament, and denying Christian burial to the dead ; the church bells ceased, the pictures in the sanctuaries were covered with black cloth, the statues of the saints were taken down, clothed in black, and placed on beds of cinders and thorns ; everything wore an aspect of gloom in France, and the terrified people paid such humble deference to the orders of the pope, that the king was universally abandoned ; two devoted servants alone remained with him, and those threw everything which the hands of the royal pair had touched, into the fire or to the dogs.

The king must have had great energy and determination, as well as sincere conjugal affection, to remain with Bertha through all these evils. She was not less devoted to Robert, who united an elegant person to most rare and amiable qualities, and who, although sought by all the princesses of France and the neighbouring countries, preferred Bertha, whom he had known from her infancy ; so that the bishops, in consenting to the marriage, were actuated

by the love of their country, for which they anticipated great advantage from this union.

Although very devout, Robert was too much attached to his wife to yield to the will of the pontiff. In the retired château of Vauvert, near Paris, the unfortunate pair braved the Roman curse, wandering together unattended through the groves and meadows, and admiring in the pure sky the image of a mild and beneficent Creator.

The irritated pope had the following formula proclaimed against the king, with the sound of the trumpet, throughout France : * “ Cursed be he in all cities ; cursed be he in all countries ! Cursed with him be his children, his cattle, and his lands. No Christian shall consider him as his brother, or return him the salute of peace ; no priest shall pray for him,

* “ Qu’il soit maudit dans les cités ; qu’il soit maudit dans les campagnes ! Que maudit soit avec lui ses enfans, ses troupeaux, et ses domaines ! Qu’aucun Chrétien ne le traite de frère et ne lui rende le salut de paix ; qu’aucun lévite ne prie en son nom, ni l’admette à l’autel des faveurs divines. Que l’amitié ni la consolation de l’espérance ne viennent point à son lit de mort ; qu’une main chérie ne lui ferme point les paupières ; que ses entrailles s’échappent de son sein entr’ouvert ; que son cadavre demeure sans sépulture sur le sol épouvanté, sans que le pèlerin jette un peu de terre sur ses restes misérables ; que son nom soit en horreur chez les races futures, ou plutôt que sa mémoire soit abolie parmi les hommes ; qu’il soit en opprobre aux générations futures, et que l’aurore d’une autre vie ne réjouisse son fantôme.”—*Anquetil*.

or permit him to approach the altar to receive Divine grace. Friendship and the consolation of hope shall not visit him when on his death-bed, neither shall any beloved hand close his eyelids; his entrails shall burst from his body; his corpse shall remain unburied on the dismayed soil, and no pilgrim shall be suffered to throw a little earth upon his miserable remains; his name shall be held in opprobrium and horror by all future generations, or rather, his memory shall be abolished from among men; and the Aurora of another life shall never dawn to rejoice his spirit." The mutual affection of Robert and Bertha consoled them in their grief; but the porticos of the Château Vauvert were constantly filled by the unhappy people, who, on their knees, entreated Robert to restore them to the exercise of the religion they so much loved and so superstitiously practised. The good king was desirous of satisfying his desolate subjects, but when he gazed upon his affectionate wife, he rejected the idea of separation; till at length Bertha, more courageous than the king, voluntarily resolved to submit to this generous sacrifice, which was to restore peace to the kingdom and dignity to the throne. Accordingly she quitted the court in 998, and the grief she endured caused the premature birth of a still-born in-

fant, which the ignorant people attributed to a just punishment from Heaven.

Bertha, secure in the love of her husband, from whom she was so cruelly separated, still hoped to remount the throne. In 1006 she made a voyage to Rome, trusting that she should be enabled to persuade Gregory's successor, Sergius IV., to confirm her marriage; but this attempt was useless, for Robert had already married again, and the unfortunate victim of papal despotism devoted the remainder of her life to erecting convents, in one of which she died in 1016. Bertha left one son, Eudes de Champagne, who became prime minister of France.

QUEEN CONSTANCE.

Two years after his separation from Bertha, Robert determined on remarrying, and made choice of Constance, daughter of William V., count of Provence, who was exceedingly beautiful, but imperious, severe, fickle, and deceitful. Her capricious temper was the torment of the good King Robert, who might have been happy with Bertha, but for the turbulent interference of the popes.

Educated in the voluptuous climate of Provence, Constance had acquired a luxurious taste, and brought a troop of comedians, dancers, singers, troubadours, and extravagant young nobles, who insensibly introduced luxury and libertinism into the court. The affection of the king rendered Constance so arrogant, that she alienated all hearts from her. The manly simplicity which formerly reigned in the palace, gave place to effeminacy and foppishness. The treasury could not supply her prodigal expenses ; each day she contrived new entertainments, in which she appeared in divers superb dresses, displaying to the best advantage the charms with which she was so richly endowed by nature. She gave directions that all the young nobles should wear arms in her presence, and occupied herself with instructions respecting the attire, accoutrements, and equipages of those who surrounded her.

To all this extravagant display Constance added a most blind and ignorant superstition. She had a dream, in which Saint Savinien informed her that she would be supplanted by her rival Bertha, who would avail herself of the discontents which she caused the people ; and to ensure his intercession in her favour, the queen ordered a superb coffin, enriched with gold, to be made for the saint's remains.

Robert could not attach himself to Constance; he did not even honour her with the title of wife or queen in familiar conversation; and being indifferent to her, he conceived an affection for Almafrede, daughter of the Count of Nogent, and the betrothed of Hugh de Beauvoir, Count Palatine, who, having discovered the attachment of his sovereign, resigned her hand: the king appointed Hugh to a high post in the government as an acknowledgment, and often went with him to Nogent, to visit Almafrede, by whom he had a son named Amauri, Count of Montfort.

Constance engaged her brother, Foulques Nerre, Count of Anjou, to revenge this infidelity, and the king having one day gone out with his minister to hunt, several gentlemen suddenly surprised them, and seizing the Count de Beauvoir, they assassinated him before the monarch's eyes, in spite of his prayers and menaces. The assassins were soon discovered to be the emissaries of the Count of Anjou, who, to gratify his sister, caused the king equal grief for the loss of his friend, and indignation at the affront; and Foulques was obliged to appear before the king and humbly ask pardon for his crime.

Robert demanded a divorce from the Pope, but

the bishops interfered, and Constance had the satisfaction of seeing her vengeance completed, for the king, fearing that the same melancholy fate that befell Hugh might be reserved for Almafede, sent her away ; shortly after which she died in a convent, in 1017.

It was then customary for the heir to the throne of France to be crowned before the demise of his father, and the coronation of Hugh was accordingly solemnized. Constance, who loved but one of her sons, and was desirous that her favourite, Robert, should supplant the two elder, resolved upon exciting the young monarch to rebel ; but not finding him so docile as she expected, she tormented him, and at length by constant ill-treatment obliged him to quit the court and take up arms.

Instead of resenting this conduct of his son, Robert, who knew the cause of the revolt, sought him, reconducted him to the palace, and treated him so kindly that he made a sincere friend of him. This young prince, who was the ornament of the court, died in the flower of his age, in the year 1026, and was lamented by all but his mother, who felt that one obstacle to her wishes was removed, and the chances of Robert's elevation augmented.

King Robert, although overwhelmed with grief,

had Henry crowned at Rheims in 1027, upon which Constance endeavoured to excite Robert against his brother Henry, but she failed in her attempt to create a quarrel between her sons; and thus disappointed in her wishes, this bad wife and mother conceived a hatred for both of them, and rendered their lives so miserable that they were obliged to leave the court, as their elder brother had done; and were brought back in like manner by their patient and excellent parent.

The death of Robert, which took place in 1031, gave Henry I. the possession of the crown; but Constance conspired against him, and having many nobles on her side, took possession of Soissons and Sens, with several other of the strongest fortresses in the kingdom; and but for the assistance of Robert-le-Diable, duke of Normandy, Henry I. would, in all probability, have lost his crown.

Constance founded the convent of the Augustins of Nôtre Dame de Paissy, and the stronghold of Puiset, in Beauce. Her superstitious devotion amounted to fanaticism; her confessor, Stephen, was accused of belonging to a sect who professed Manicheism, by which he incurred the penalty of death by burning: the queen met him when being led to execution, and, according to the custom of

the time, put out one of his eyes with a small stick which she carried in her hand for the purpose, and afterwards assisted in the execution of this unfortunate man and his companions, who were confined in a small thatched hut, surrounded with combustibles, which being set on fire, they were consumed in the flames.

This bad queen died in Melun in 1032, and was interred at Saint Denis, by the side of her good husband, whose repose she had so grievously troubled.

France acquired but one advantage by the marriage of its king with Constance, and that was an involuntary benefit, the result of her vanity, she having introduced poets from Provence, to celebrate her beauty, before which poetry was only known and cultivated in the Latin tongue.

She had four sons—Hugh, Henry I., Robert, and Eudes,—and two daughters, Adele and Adelaïde; the former married Robert-le-Diable, duke of Normandy, and father of William the Conqueror of England; the second was united to Baldwin V., count of Flanders.

QUEEN ANNE OF RUSSIA.

(Reign of Henry I.)

HENRY's first wife was Matilda, daughter of the emperor Conrad II., who died without leaving any children ; and Henry, at the solicitations of his council, married Anne, daughter of the Czar Jaroslaw of Russia, the renown of that princess's merits and beauty having reached the court of France. The king sent the bishop of Meaux with a great escort into that distant and then almost unknown country, and Jaroslaw confided his daughter to the faith of the French ambassador in the year 1044.

During the first nine years of her marriage Anne addressed fervent and unceasing prayers to heaven for the gift of a child ; at length her supplications were granted in 1053, and she gave birth to Philip, afterwards king of France.

At the death of the king, which occurred in 1060, Anne, feeling herself unequal to support the weight of government, renounced the regency, as well as the guardianship of her son Philip, and retired to the abbey of St. Vincent de Senlis, which she had rebuilt and endowed.

A letter addressed to her by Pope Nicholas II.

has been preserved, in which that pontiff recommends her to multiply her donations to the poor, and to establish monasteries; he also encourages her to employ herself, as she had always done, both as queen and Christian, with the duties of her position. But the queen, who had always during her husband's life enjoyed much influence over his mind, as well as great authority at Court, found the retirement of the cloister tedious and dull; and having received an offer of marriage from Raoul, Count de Crespy in Valois, Anne accepted the offer, and was married in 1061, although there were obstacles to the alliance.

Raoul, who had repudiated his wife to obtain the queen, was a near relation of Henry I.; and this pair, having married without the consent of the bishops, were excommunicated. They were too much attached to separate on that account: nevertheless time effected that which religious threats and denunciations failed to do; and Anne and Raoul, who had become indifferent to each other, availed themselves of the customary method, under the veil of religion, to set aside their union, pleading a spiritual alliance, which alliance perhaps never existed, but it was not difficult to produce witnesses to prove it. This marriage lasted six

years, and was dissolved in 1067. Raoul is said to have assumed the monastic garb, and became archbishop of Rheims ; but the convent having no attractions for Anne, and her only relatives in France being her sons, who were engaged in their own affairs, she retired to Russia, and ended her days in the bosom of her family, in 1082.

Queen Anne left three sons,—Philip I., King of France, Robert, and Hugh.

QUEEN BERTHA OF HOLLAND.

(Reign of Philip I.)

BERTHA, daughter of Florent I., Count of Holland and Friesland, and of Gertrude of Saxony, was married to Philip I., King of France, in 1071. This queen disappointed the hopes of the king and nation during the first ten years of her marriage, at the expiration of which time she gave birth to Louis-le-Gros, in 1081. The king was overjoyed at the birth of the prince royal, and the event was celebrated with every demonstration both of solemn thanksgivings and gay rejoicings.

After the birth of three children, the king, who had lived twenty years in a state of happiness and

tranquillity with his wife, began to give himself up to excesses, and discovered for the first time that Bertha had been more nearly allied to him before their marriage than the limits of the Church allowed, and that in consequence his marriage was illegal and criminal; and he had no difficulty in finding genealogists to prove the alliance, and ecclesiastics to confirm the divorce. Accordingly Bertha was dismissed by her inconstant husband in 1091, and died forsaken and forgotten in 1093.

She had three children,—Louis VI., King of France; Henry, who died young; and Constance, who married Bohemond II., Prince of Antioch and Tarentum.

QUEEN BERTRADE DE MONTFORT.

AFTER the divorce of Bertha, King Philip I. demanded the hand of Emma, daughter of the Count of Sicily, which was most readily given. The young betrothed embarked in a vessel richly stored with magnificent presents, and landed on the coast of Provence; but the fickle monarch had changed his determination ere she arrived, and Emma returned to her country to repine over this disappointment and cruel affront.

Bertrade, daughter of Simon, Duke of Montfort, and wife to Foulques Béchin, Count of Anjou, had won the heart of Philip : this princess was beautiful and intellectual, and so agreeable in conversation that she could adapt it to all dispositions. She was married to the Count of Anjou to satisfy the ambitious wishes of her guardian, although the Count had already divorced two wives. Bertrade was no sooner acquainted with the divorce of the king, than she conceived a design of sharing his throne ; and under a pretext of disgust for her husband, who was old and sickly, she sent a confidential messenger to Philip, proposing that he should carry her off.

The King, who admired the beautiful Countess, and was blinded by her protestations of esteem and friendship, which flattered his self-love, did not perceive that ambition dictated the proposal, and favoured Bertrade's culpable designs. They met in the church of St. Martin at Tours, where Philip had engaged to regulate some affairs of interest for Foulques ; and during the consecration of the baptismal fonts in St. John's Chapel, while the inhabitants were engaged in the religious ceremony, Bertrade left the church, and, escorted by a troop of Philip's cavalry, proceeded to Orleans, where Eudes, the bishop of Bayeux, consecrated this adulterous

marriage, which the Count of Anjou silently suffered to take place, in 1096.

The Pope Urbain II., and his successor Pascal II., vainly opposed this scandalous alliance. Roger, the Pope's legate, was charged to examine into the circumstances of the King's divorce, and assembled a council at Autun, by which Philip was excommunicated for espousing Bertrade; he would not, however, separate from her, and the French clergy, who were jealous of the liberties of their church, perseveringly contended against the authority of three ambitious popes, who had been successively absolute for the last ten years, and notwithstanding the thunders of Rome and the serious consequences which might have accrued from this opposition, Bertrade still retained the title and honours of Queen of France. The pope, to punish the obstinacy of Philip, deprived him of the power of nominating the bishops of his kingdom, and, in order to console the Count of Anjou for his wife's infidelity, conferred on him the right of electing the bishop of Angers.

Bertrade was unworthy of the king's regard, for while Louis (his son by Bertha) was in England, she endeavoured to procure his death, to insure the elevation of her own son to the throne. Henry I.,

king of England, received a letter, bearing Philip's seal, requesting that he would have Louis secretly murdered, or retain him prisoner. Henry, who would not violate the rights of hospitality, to be the minister of Bertrade's cruel ambition, informed Louis, who returned to France, and, throwing himself at Philip's feet, begged him to strike with his own hand the son he had condemned. An explanation was the consequence, and the young prince demanded justice, declaring that if he was refused, he would satisfy his own vengeance. This protestation nearly cost him his life; for the queen gave him poison, of which he did not take sufficient to destroy him, and which was afterwards analyzed. The prince would have killed Bertrade, if the king had not interfered and reconciled them.

In 1104, Philip obtained absolution for his marriage with Bertrade, after having walked barefooted during winter to demand it of the council of bishops at Paris. The old count of Anjou was base enough to receive a visit from the king and queen at Anjou, where he entertained them with magnificent feasts, and loaded his truant wife with honours: this despicable conduct so astonished the people of that time, that it was generally believed Bertrade had bewitched him.

Philip's affection for his beautiful queen never diminished. After his death, which occurred in 1108, she retired to the convent of Hautebruyere, near Chartres, where she took the veil in 1115, preferring to sustain the dignity of queen dowager to forming another alliance, although still young and beautiful. Bertrade made many donations to the monastery of Fontevrault, but did not long survive her seclusion from the world; for, having submitted to the most austere and rigorous rules of the convent, her health suffered from the change, and she died in 1117. She was buried in the church of the convent of Hautebruyere. Her only child by the count of Anjou was Foulques, king of Jerusalem; her offspring by king Philip, were Philip, baron of Meung-sur-Loire, and Fleury; and two daughters—Cecile, who was married to Ponce of Toulouse, count of Tripoli, and Eustatia, wife of the count d'Etamps.

QUEEN ADELAÏDE, OR ALICE OF SAVOY.

(Reign of Louis VI.)

BEFORE Louis VI., surnamed *le Gros*, ascended the throne, he was married to Luciane, daughter

of Guy, count of Rochefort, and lived with her for three years on terms of affection; but her father having on several occasions arrogated to himself power which belonged only to royalty, he so seriously offended the prince, that he determined to humble the pride of the count by disgracing his daughter. He therefore demanded a divorce, alleging that the marriage had never been consummated, and the separation was pronounced in the council of Troyes, by order of pope Pascal II., in the year 1107. Luciane lost the crown of France through the fault of her father, and in 1116 was married to Guichard, lord of Banjeu. History mentions nothing further respecting this princess.

Louis VI. hesitated some time before he contracted a second marriage, and at length was persuaded, at the solicitation of Yves, bishop of Chartres, who possessed great influence over him, to ask the hand of Adelaïde, or Alice de Maurienne, daughter of Humbert IV., count of Savoy, and of Gisele de Burgundy, who was sister of pope Calixte II., and a descendant of Charlemagne. The request was complied with, and the marriage celebrated at Paris in the year 1116.

Louis had great love and esteem for his wife, who was in every respect worthy of it: he even

united her name with his own in all public matters, such as the compiling of charters, &c.; and although she performed no distinguished part during her reign, she is nevertheless highly to be commended for the attention and care she bestowed on the education of her children, daily presiding over all that concerned their studies, and, what is much more important, setting them an example of morality and virtue.

Louis, happy to return to his palace when war permitted him the relaxation, enjoyed with Alice that too frequent stranger to the palace—domestic peace. She had the misfortune of seeing her eldest son, Philip, killed by a fall from his horse in 1131; in consequence of which, her second son, Louis, was crowned at Rheims in the place of his eldest brother. The solemnization was performed with great pomp, by pope Innocent II., amidst an immense assemblage, and the queen assisted with the king at this brilliant ceremony.

Alice had seven sons and a daughter by the king: Hugh and Philip, who died young; Louis VII., king of France; Henry, archbishop of Rheims; Philip, elected bishop of Paris, which he refused in favour of his preceptor, Peter Lombard; Robert, count of Dreux, from whom the celebrated cardinal

Richelieu descended; Peter, prince of Courtenay, by his marriage with Isabelle, daughter of Renaud; and Constance, who was the wife of Eustache of Boulogne, and afterwards queen of England.

Louis VI. died in 1137, and a year after that occurrence Alice married Matthew de Montmorency, constable of France, by whom she had a daughter, who was united to Gaucher de Chatillon.

After having lived fifteen years with the constable, Alice obtained permission to pass the remainder of her life in the seclusion of the abbey Montmartre near Paris, which she had founded for the Benedictine nuns, and where she died, and was buried, in 1154. Her ashes have been twice displaced by the abbesses of that monastery.

QUEEN ELEONOR OF GUYENNE.

(Reign of Louis VII.)

WHEN Louis-le-Gros was declining, he received the will of William X., duke of Aquitaine, in which he entrusted his daughter Eleonor to the king's guardianship, bequeathing the inheritance of Guyenne and Poitou to his son Louis-le-Jeune, on condition that he would marry her. Louis, who

would not suffer so excellent an opportunity of extending his kingdom to escape him, knowing by the effect of his wise laws that the royal power was greatly increased since the diminution of feudality, added one more benefit to the many he had conferred on his country, by engaging his son to accept the duke of Aquitaine's offer. This condition was not difficult to comply with, Eleonor being very beautiful, and only sixteen years of age; she was intellectual and accomplished, but her manners, though polished, were affected, and she was fond of admiration.

After paying the last duties to his father, Louis set out for Guyenne, followed by an escort of five hundred young lords, the flower of the nobility. He conducted his young bride to the court of France after the celebration of the marriage, which took place in Bordeaux in 1137, with a splendour and magnificence hitherto unknown.

Although Louis, who was the same age as Eleonor, was very remarkable for his pleasing countenance and tall stature, she was not long in discovering that he was narrow-minded, frivolous, and suspicious; and, moreover, that he did not occupy himself with the affairs of state. For some years their union was untroubled, although the

queen, who was of an ambitious temper, saw with a jealous eye the influence which the abbot Suger possessed over the mind of her husband, and the high authority he held in the government of the kingdom ; she was also much dissatisfied at the scrupulous and superstitious attention which he paid to his devotions.

It was this religious enthusiasm which caused Louis to conceive the surprising and unexpected project of wresting the Holy Land from the hands of the Infidels. An ecclesiastical assemblage took place at Vezelais in 1146, at which Bernard, abbot of Clairvaux, protested with energy and enthusiasm against the violation of the Holy Land, holding forth the duty and necessity of an expedition to Palestine ; and, without considering the difficulties of the undertaking or the evils that might arise from the enterprise, the Second Crusade was decided on.

The king, who was present at this assembly, was the first to decorate himself with a red cross, a sign of distinction which all the cavaliers of the Holy Land adopted.

The queen, who was delighted at the prospect of an adventure, imitated her husband in assuming the red cross, and looked forward with great satisfaction towards her long voyage to Palestine, where

she hoped to see her uncle Raymond, duke of Antioch, to whom she had been much attached from childhood.

At the expiration of a year the preparations for this expedition were completed, much to the dissatisfaction of the people, who were burthened with taxes to supply the necessary expenses: the king and queen set out from Aigues-Mortes for Asia in 1147. Many women, instigated by the same principles of curiosity and religious belief, accompanied their husbands; and even young ladies followed their lovers on this sainted pilgrimage.

Other nations followed the example of Louis VII., and the whole of Europe precipitated itself into Asia.

Poets accompanied these warriors to immortalize the victories of the brave, and the beauty of the fair, by their songs; amongst these was the famous William d'Agoult, who is represented by a contemporary as "bon gentilhomme, poëte aimable; l'enfant chéri des dames; *bien amoureux d'une Princesse*, mais près des demoiselles grandement débordé en toutes actions."

This numerous army of soldiers, priests, abbesses, and wives, arrived at Constantinople in much disorder, and greatly reduced in numbers. Louis was

defeated in the desert of Syria, and soon lost the flower of his nobility and of his soldiers. He found Eleonor's uncle Raymond at Antioch, surrounded by infidels, and greatly in want of assistance. The meeting gave the greatest gratification to the king and queen, as well as Raymond, who demanded succour of the former; but Louis declared that he had made a vow to proceed at once to Jerusalem, promising that he would afterwards willingly lend him all the aid in his power.

Raymond, who was in the greatest extremity, used every endeavour to persuade Louis; he applied to Eleonor, who multiplied her intercessions in favour of her uncle, but in vain: a spirit of fanaticism possessed the king, and he persisted in a refusal, which so incensed the queen, that she united with Raymond to revenge herself. This prince did all he could to heighten her discontent, and induced her to remain with him at Antioch by offering her much pleasure and entertainment at his palace.

It was in this place that the queen conceived an affection for the famous Sultan Saladin, which has been the foundation of so many romances, and Raymond encouraged the attachment, in the hope of gaining an ally in Saladin. This young Sultan, whom Eleonor saw for the first time at a tourna-

ment in the year 1148, gained her admiration by his skill in arms and horsemanship; she presented him with a scarf, which her own fingers had embroidered, and received diamonds and perfumes from him, till at length her indiscreet conduct became so apparent that it reached the ears of the king, who was told that the queen had been seen seated beneath the shade of a grove of palm-trees, caressing the young lord of the Saracens.

It is said that when Saladin declared his passion, she replied that she only understood love in French, and that the young Turk applied himself so diligently and made such surprising efforts to acquire the language, that he was a proficient in twenty days: we may, however, be permitted to doubt this statement.

This was not her only improper attachment. Brantôme says, "*Notre jeune reine Eléonore n'accompagna son mari en outre-mer et en la guerre sainte, que pour practiquer souvent la gendarmerie et la soldatesque.*"

Louis, alarmed at the reports which were spreading relative to his wife, conceived a just indignation against Eleonor and Raymond; he immediately quitted Jerusalem, and returned to Antioch, where he entreated her to fly from this dangerous court. Her

refusal increased his suspicions ; accordingly the king caused her to be forcibly taken from the palace.

Eleonor, expecting henceforward nothing but reproaches and perhaps punishment, acquired a still greater dislike for her husband, who, on his part, was occupied in thinking of the best plan to adopt towards bringing about the separation which both most ardently desired ; she remarked, before her attendants, that he was more calculated to be a monk than a king, because he was desirous of introducing the peculiar custom of shaving the head and chin, and appearing in every respect unlike a cavalier such as she admired.

In 1149, Louis, having lost nearly all his army, had much difficulty in re-embarking for France, which he at length succeeded in doing, after having performed various acts of devotion at Jerusalem, which was all the satisfaction he derived from this expedition. After their return to France, in the year 1150, Eleonor gave birth to a daughter known by the name of *La belle Alix*, who was afterwards married to the Count of Blois.

Louis immediately resolved upon making preparations for his divorce, though eagerly opposed by the sage advice of his prime minister Suger,

who proposed that at least he should obtain the pope's consent; but Eleonor, whose tastes were quite at variance with the mystical and serious character of her husband, offered no opposition. All the barons and bishops were assembled at Beaugency on the occasion, and the king presided over the council: the archbishop of Bordeaux was charged with Eleonor's defence, as she declined to be present, and he maintained that it was the queen's desire to comply with the king's wishes for a separation, on account of the existence of a relationship; and on this pretext the divorce was pronounced in 1152, during the popedom of Eugene III., but with a clause permitting the parties to marry again.

Louis VII. is most seriously to blame on this occasion for his conduct; as, instead of confining his wife in a convent, he put it in her power to form another alliance, by which he abandoned all title to the provinces which he had obtained by his marriage with her; which unpardonable folly afterwards produced those interminable wars between England and France, in which human life was so prodigally sacrificed.

The queen left her two daughters, Mary and Alice, with Louis, and departed for Poitou, which,

with Guyenne, was evacuated by the French garrisons, and from that time those places were governed in the name of the Duchess Eleonor.

Her beauty and wealth caused her to encounter some obstacles on her return to Poitiers, for Thibaut, count of Champagne, attempted to carry her off, but failed in his ambitious enterprise ; and Geoffry, count of Anjou, had formed the same project, intending to take possession of her at the Bridge of Piles, and marry her by force ; but the princess, having been informed of his determination, took another road, and arrived safely at the place of her destination.

Some time previously to her divorce, Eleonor, who had declared she would marry none but a real monarch, became fascinated with Henry Plantagenet, duke of Normandy, Maine, and Anjou, and successor to the throne of his father, Stephen, king of England ; and she immediately formed a project to ally herself to him, as being of a disposition more compatible with her own.

The chancellor of England, Thomas à Becket, archbishop of Canterbury, describes Henry Plantagenet as fair, and possessing an intellectual and thoughtful countenance, his smile gracious and amiable, but when irritated fierce and terrible in his

expression; tall, with a majestic air and good address; on horseback, easy and graceful; having a broad chest and muscular members. Such was the man who won the heart of Eleonor. This prince, who was then but twenty years of age, foresaw the advantages of a union with the ex-queen, and being desirous of aggrandising his dominions, and pleased with her beauty and vivacity, he demanded her hand in marriage, which the princess accorded with much warmth.

As soon as this news arrived at the court of France, the king and lords foresaw with alarm the great power of the future king of England, possessor of the finest provinces of France; and employed every possible means to prevent the marriage, such as anonymous letters and satirical railleries, but their efforts were useless: Henry was sufficiently clear-sighted to discover the interested motives which induced them to take these steps, and two months after the divorce was pronounced at Beaugency, he proceeded to Poitiers accompanied by all the nobility of Normandy, and had his marriage with Eleonor solemnized. Thus the vigilance of Louis and the Abbot Suger was deceived by the skill and policy of a princess aged twenty-seven years, whose projects were satisfied at the expense of the

king's honour, and the injury of France, and which was the origin of the evils that country sustained by the long connexion of the two nations, between whom there was incessant war for upwards of three centuries. Two years after the marriage of Henry and Eleonor, the death of Stephen placed the crown of England on Henry's brow, and the new sovereigns proceeded to take possession of their throne.

The queen's mode of life in England was very unlike her former days, which she had spent in France, in the midst of the pleasures of court and the triumphs of beauty : moreover, Henry was inconstant and voluptuous, and Eleonor failed in fixing his heart ; he displayed the same sentiments of coquetry towards her, which she had formerly manifested towards Louis, and the king of France was revenged by the king of England.

Though she lived on apparently good terms with her husband, the queen was furiously jealous, and determined that nothing should prevent her punishing her unfaithful husband ; but Henry's firmness and determination compelled her to restrain her animosity for some years. It was no longer the credulous and complaisant Louis of France with whom she had to deal, but the proud Henry Plantagenet

of England, father of Richard, Cœur-de-Lion ; nevertheless Eleonor was not to be subdued—she only waited an opportunity of revenge.

The king's eldest son, Henry, was crowned, at the suggestion of his mother, and with the consent of his father, in 1107, and Eleonor availed herself of this opportunity to instil into the mind of the young prince that this act of paternal goodness conferred on him the actual rights of royalty, and encouraged the son to revolt against his father, in which she assisted him with her intrigues in the two courts of France and England.

Accordingly, Henry II. was attacked by Eleonor's two brothers, the duke of Bretagne and Aquitaine, and by the king of Scotland ; but that grandeur of soul and courage which rendered his name so celebrated, enabled him to overcome all these opponents : his rebel sons were forced to submit, but the vindictive Eleonor was not satisfied.

English chronicles relate that amongst Henry's favourites was a young lady of great beauty, to whom he was devotedly attached, named Rosamond Clifford ; and to protect her from the queen's jealous enmity, he placed her in a castle carefully preserved by a labyrinth which surrounded it, and which is viewed by the curious who visit

Woodstock till the present time with much interest. Notwithstanding the king's care, Eleonor, taking advantage of his absence in Ireland, perseveringly trod the mazes of the labyrinth until she discovered the path which conducted her to the fair Rosamond's dwelling; where, after loading her with invectives, she offered her a choice of death, by dagger or poison, which she presented to her; the unfortunate girl chose the latter, and the cruel queen not only compelled her to swallow the draught, but barbarously remained to watch the convulsive agony of her victim. Not content with this vengeance, she incessantly nourished a project she had formed to dethrone Henry II.; and found in her former husband, Louis VII., an ally base enough to favour her resentment.

Bent upon Henry's downfall, this queen became the very soul of intrigue and disorder; and, aided by the French king, she succeeded a second time in arming the sons against their father, and the people against their king; on this occasion Richard-Cœur-de-Lion, and Geoffrey, joined in their brother Henry's rebellion, in the year 1173. But again justice triumphed, the princes submitted and obtained their father's pardon; but Eleonor was arrested by order

of the king, and expiated her crimes in a close prison.

At length the good King Henry died, and Richard-Cœur-de-Lion succeeded to the throne, his elder brother, Henry, being dead. Richard's first act was to liberate his mother, who, perhaps from a feeling of sympathy for those who were in the same unhappy condition as she had been, persuaded him to throw open the doors of the prisons in every town through which she passed; but, however kind the intention, this was certainly a bad act for society.

Fifteen years of captivity did not serve to soften Eleonor's malignant disposition. Before his death, Henry had asked the hand of the Princess Alice of France, daughter of Louis VII., and Alice of Champagne, for his son Richard, which was accorded, and Alice proceeded to England; but an idle rumour had reached the queen, that Henry intended to divorce her, and marry Alice. From that moment the powerless, but still jealous captive, conceived an inveterate dislike to this princess. She represented to her son Richard that Alice had been the object of his father's passion, and easily contrived to disgust Richard with the idea of the marriage;

accordingly Alice was sent back to France, not, however, without considerable presents to soften the affront.

Eleonor next proceeded to the court of the king of Navarre, and obtained the hand of his daughter, the Princess Berenger, for her son Richard, who married her in Sicily, before he departed for the Holy Land.

During his absence he gave the queen, his mother, for whom he had great respect, absolute power in England. Eleonor was not, however, regent during her son's unfortunate crusade, nevertheless she contrived to restrain the ambitious disputants for Richard's throne, and more particularly John, surnamed Lackland. She was also most serviceable to him when he was arrested by Leopold duke of Austria, and carried prisoner to the emperor, in 1192; for, notwithstanding Richard's numerous enemies, she negotiated for his liberty with indefatigable zeal, wrote to Pope Celestin III., imploring his intervention, and, although upwards of seventy years of age, took a journey to Germany to facilitate her views.

Many and great were the obstacles opposed to his release, but Eleonor neglected no attempt; and in spite of the counteracting efforts of France, her son was delivered from captivity by means of a ran-

sum of 120,000 silver marks, which not only exhausted the English finances, but even called for the sacrifice of the sacramental vessels, which were melted to supply the demand.

This was Eleonor's last act, with the exception of some intrigues relative to the succession of the kings of England; after which she consecrated the last languid days of her sad old age to devotion, by retiring to the abbey of Fontevrault, which she had richly endowed, and where she took the veil a short period before her death, which occurred in 1204, at the age of eighty-one: she was buried in the choir of the church of Fontevrault.

This queen had eleven children,—two daughters by Louis VII. (Mary and Alix), who married the two brothers, counts of Champagne and Blois, and nine by Henry II.,—six sons, of whom three were kings of England; and two daughters, who were married to kings; besides Matilda, wife of the of Bavaria, and mother of the emperor Othon IV.

During her rule at the court of France, Eleonor, who, like many of her contemporaries, considered the affairs of love and courtship the principal business of her life, instituted and presided over a court composed entirely of women, where each day they laid their complaints against those cavaliers who

had been false or discourteous, and discussed all questions relative to sentimental metaphysics with the utmost gravity: the decrees of this tribunal, which were sometimes most unreasonable, were invariably published with solemnity and executed with the greatest rigour.

The early part of this queen's reign is celebrated for the loves of Heloise and Abelard.

QUEEN CONSTANCE OF CASTILE.

THE misfortunes that attended Louis VII.'s first marriage did not prevent his contracting a second. After his divorce he despatched the archbishop of Sens, with proposals to Elizabeth Beatrice Constance Marie, daughter of Alphonso VIII., king of Castile.

The Castilian king had other views for his daughter, but the facility with which the French kings crossed the Pyrenees presented too much danger for him to hazard a refusal. Constance was accordingly bestowed on Louis, and the marriage celebrated at Orleans in 1154, in opposition to the

protestations of the archbishop of Rheims, who claimed the prerogative of his episcopal see.

After the celebration of the marriage a report was circulated that Constance was not the legitimate daughter of Alphonso, which gave Louis great uneasiness, and occasioned him a journey to Spain. From the time of king Robert a very marked distinction had been established between children born within the sanctity of marriage, and those who were the offspring of mistresses, who, before that epoch, had almost indiscriminately enjoyed the title of wife or queen; and as the object of Louis's marriage was to ensure a male heir to the throne, it was necessary to clear up the difficulty relative to the birth of Constance: the king therefore visited the court of Castile, under the pretext of a pilgrimage to Saint Jacques, in Gallicia. Alphonso received Louis at Burgos with great magnificence, and calmed his anxiety by establishing the legitimacy of his daughter.

Constance, with whom the king enjoyed the sweets of domestic peace, lived but four years after her marriage, having died in childbed in 1159, without fulfilling her destination as queen of France, having left but one daughter, Margaret, who was, first, queen of England, and afterwards of Hungary.

QUEEN AND REGENT ALIX,
DE CHAMPAGNE.

LOUIS was too anxious for a male heir to suffer himself to remain unmarried; he therefore fixed upon Alix de Champagne, daughter of the count Thibaut IV., for his third wife—a choice which the interests of policy dictated, Champagne being one of the most powerful provinces in France: moreover, Louis VII.'s two daughters, by Eleonor (Mary and Alice), were married to Alix de Champagne's two brothers; therefore from this union very beneficial results were anticipated for the kingdom.

With the reign of Louis VII. commenced the era in which France, emerging from the gloom of ignorance and barbarism, gave birth to more gentle and polished manners; which renders that period remarkable in the annals of civilization.

Although Alix was not in the spring-time of her life, nevertheless her superior talents, her amiable disposition, her elegant manners, and her taste for the cultivation of the fine arts and the poetry which Eleonor de Guyenne had introduced into France, rendered her the ornament of a court renowned for its politeness. She was crowned at Paris by the archbishop of Sens in 1160. Four

years elapsed before Alix had any children, till at length, the hopes of the king and nation being almost exhausted, Louis had recourse to religious foundations and public prayers ; at length, in 1165 she gave birth to Philip Augustus, surnamed Dieu-donné, or " God's gift."

The queen paid devoted attention to the education of her son, who, through her excellent precepts, became one of the greatest amongst the kings of France ; for Louis was entirely occupied with his declining health, being at forty-five years of age as decrepit as a man of eighty, and without the power of using several of his members, which circumstance induced him to depart for England in 1179, for the purpose of visiting the tomb of Saint Thomas-à-Becket, of Canterbury, for the re-establishment of his health. Here he was attacked with a paralytic seizure, caused by the humidity of the climate, which increased his inability to govern, and a great part of the direction of public affairs fell upon Alix, whose first act on his return was to propose the coronation of her son. The king, who felt his end approaching, willingly agreed to her proposition, and Philip Augustus was solemnly crowned king of France, with great pomp and splendour, by the archbishop of Rheims.

Louis was desirous of marrying his son to Isabella of Hainault, niece to the count of Flanders ; but Alix was greatly opposed to the union, as she foresaw the count of Flanders would not fail to participate in the administration of affairs, which she was anxious to reserve for herself after the death of her husband. All her efforts could not turn aside the king's determination, and the marriage was celebrated ; five months after which Louis died, in the year 1180.

Alix erected a magnificent mausoleum to the memory of Louis VII. ; it was covered with plates of gold and silver, and deposited at the abbey of Barbeau, near Melun. Before his death, Louis pronounced Alix regent of France ; but she was unfortunate in her projects of domination, for with it she drew upon herself the hatred of the count of Flanders, and the discontent of her son. At length Henry II., king of England, contrived a reconciliation between them, and it was agreed that Philip Augustus should pay the queen-mother an annuity of seven Paris livres a day, about sixty thousand francs a year, which was at that epoch a very considerable sum.

When Philip was about to join the crusade which took place at the end of the twelfth century, he

evinced the high opinion he entertained of his mother's talents by appointing her guardian of his young son Louis, and governor of France, with the consent of the barons; of which charge she acquitted herself to the general satisfaction. In a difference which took place between two of the bishops, and which was referred to the judgment of Pope Alexander III., she sustained the privileges of the crown of France with the greatest energy. "Pro-fiter," she wrote to the Roman pontiff, "de l'absence d'un prince qui n'a quitté ses états que par pitié, pour y jeter le trouble ou l'autoriser, c'est offenser Dieu. Chargée du soin de ce royaume, je dois pourvoir à sa tranquillité et prévenir les innovations qui pourraient y introduire du désordre."

On his return to France in 1192, Philip Augustus warmly expressed his satisfaction at the manner in which she had conducted the government, although her regency had lasted but two years.

Alix built several religious establishments: those particularly worthy of notice are the abbey du Tard, and the church of Saint Port. She died at Paris, much regretted, in the year 1206, and was interred at the abbey of Pontigny, in Burgundy. Besides Philip Augustus, Alix de Champagne had two daughters: the eldest, Alice, was betrothed to

Richard Cœur-de-Lion, king of England, but married to the count of Ponthieu; the second was successively married to two Greek princes, Alexis and Andronic Comnène.

QUEEN ISABELLA OF HAINAULT.

(Reign of Philip Augustus.)

THIS queen, who was daughter of Baldwin IV., count of Hainault, and a descendant of Charlemagne, was married to Philip Augustus, to satisfy the political views of her uncle and guardian, the count of Flanders, who hoped by that alliance to obtain great authority and influence, and to be associated with Alix de Champagne in the regency of France.

France, already much enlarged by her monarch's alliances, received Artois in addition, by Philip's marriage with Isabella, or, as some historians call her, Elizabeth of Hainault. Her marriage was celebrated at Bapaume, in the year 1180, and one month after, the ceremony of the coronation of the king and queen took place at Saint Denis, when the archbishop of Sens placed the diadem upon the brows of the young pair, who were then each of them only twelve years of age. This marriage

created a quarrel between Philip and his tutor, the archbishop of Rheims, because the members of the house of Champagne feared it would lessen the influence they had obtained under Louis VII.

The young queen thought that gratitude obliged her to interest herself in favour of her uncle, the count of Flanders, in consequence of which the queen-mother, Alix de Champagne, and her partisans, excited the king against his wife. They persuaded him that her friendship for her uncle was very suspicious, and likely to be injurious to the kingdom, and calumniated the innocent actions of this young queen, who at the age of fourteen was deprived of both counsel and support. The king at first treated her with indifference, and at length declared openly his sentiments of aversion for her, and compelled her to retire to a monastery at Senlis in the year 1183.

Isabella contrived to excite the sympathy of the bishop of Senlis, who alone ventured to become her champion. Abandoned and despised by Philip, she was on the eve of being divorced; but her prudence and resignation assisted her in sustaining adversity with a modest courage, and her constancy enabled her to triumph over her enemies. Her father, the count of Hainault, went to Pontoise to

visit her, and persuaded her to write to her husband and explain her conduct. Philip was satisfied, and recalled Isabella, after three years' exile, in 1186. He was perhaps partly actuated by selfish motives, as he would have been obliged to give up Artois if he had obtained a divorce; but by degrees Isabella's conduct gave rise to other sentiments, and Philip began for the first time to feel an attachment for his wife. She was then eighteen years of age, and twelve months after this reconciliation gave birth to Louis VIII. at Paris, in 1187. Such was the enthusiasm of the people of the town for Isabella, that for seven days they celebrated the event with every possible demonstration of rejoicing; the French people looked upon her as the offspring of Charlemagne, and she had not only gained the love of the people, but her amiable conduct had obtained the esteem of her mother-in-law, who deeply repented of her injustice, and repaired the injury she had done her by numerous tokens of sincere friendship.

Isabella's happiness lasted but a short time, for in 1189, at the period when Philip Augustus was about to undertake the third crusade, he had the misfortune of losing his young wife; she died in giving birth to twins, who did not survive her.

Isabella left but one son, Louis, afterwards king of France. This princess, who lived only twenty-two years, was interred with great pomp in the choir of the church of Notre-Dame-de-Paris.

QUEENS INGBORGE OF DENMARK, AND
AGNES OF MERANIE.

INGBORGE, called in France Ingerberge or Engelberge, was daughter of Woldemar, king of Denmark, born in 1176, and affianced first to the son of the emperor Frederick I.; but the marriage not having taken place, the young princess was married to Philip Augustus in the year 1193, for the purpose of contracting a formidable alliance against England. The bishop of Nogon, and the counts of Nevers and Montmorenci, were sent to demand the hand of Ingborge, which was willingly accorded; but the two French nobles were retained as hostages in Denmark, until the marriage of the princess should have actually taken place.

Philip went to Amiens to meet the princess, dressed in full armour and mounted on his war-horse, and she entered the town followed by her female attendants, all on horseback. She was

married the same day, and crowned on the one following; and having received four thousand silver marks from her father, the fêtes were very magnificent. But on the day which succeeded her coronation, the king made some frivolous excuse to dissolve the union, although the queen was very beautiful, and particularly remarkable for her fine head of hair, and the exquisite form of her hands and arms.

She was immediately repudiated, and at the age of seventeen years sent an exile into Flanders. For some time Ingborge resided at the Abbey of Cisoin, near Lille, in a state of captivity so nearly allied to indigence, that it reflects shame on the memory of Philip Augustus. Left to obtain her livelihood by manual labour, this beautiful and noble captive, far from murmuring at her fate, implored Heaven's forgiveness for the husband who persecuted her. In the bosom of poverty she preserved an elevated spirit, and, queen amidst all her misfortunes, she indignantly refused to renounce her title to the rights and honours of the crown of France.

Nevertheless the divorce was pronounced by an assemblage of barons and bishops at Compiègne, under the ridiculous pretext of relationship, in the year 1194; and Ingborge wept bitterly when the

interpreters signified to her that her marriage was dissolved: her only reply was "*Mauvaise France!*" The venerable Stephen of Tournai carried the appeal of this iniquitous sentence to Rome, and Ingborge's brother, Canute VI., King of Denmark, imprisoned the hostages.

Philip Augustus, who considered that the union was entirely dissolved, espoused at Compiègne, in 1196, Mary Agnes de Meranie, the daughter of a French duke, and a descendant of Charlemagne; this princess was exceedingly beautiful and talented, graceful and virtuous. The king was very much enamoured with Agnes, who accompanied him in his hunting excursions, and was the ornament of the palace, and the theme of minstrelsy among the troubadours and poets; the barons entitled her "*La Fleur des Dames.*"

In the mean time Ingborge maintained her dignified character; she was neither subdued by her unjust banishment nor by her poverty, which was far more dishonourable to Philip than to herself, and she obstinately refused to resign the double title of wife and queen. Many persons were touched with sympathy for her misfortunes, and admiration for her resignation, and even the most insensible interested themselves in favour of this

injured queen. Several of the bishops who pronounced her divorce became her partisans, and the King of Denmark, taking advantage of the general feeling in her favour, sent ambassadors to Rome to represent to Pope Celestin III. the outrage that had been offered to his sister, upon which the pontiff repealed the sentence of divorce pronounced at Compiegne, and declared the marriage of Philip with Agnes de Meranie to be null.

Innocent III., his successor, followed up the affair which his predecessor had taken in hand, and wrote to the king desiring him to reinstate his wife; this command not being complied with, he threatened France with an interdiction. Philip, instead of submitting, revenged himself on the clergy and nobility, whose goods he confiscated, and above all upon poor Ingborge, whose unhappiness he augmented by sending her to the Château d'Etamps, where she suffered all the misery of a most rigorous captivity; nevertheless the unfortunate queen maintained her firmness.

In consequence of Philip's conduct the kingdom was placed under an interdict in the year 1199, which lasted eight months, and, as usual, the disastrous consequences it entailed caused the whole

of France to murmur, for all ranks and conditions were alike discontented.

Philip, who saw his throne shaken by the bulls of Innocent III., and that the disorders were increasing daily, feared that the result might be serious, and professed humiliation and resignation to the will of the pontiff; accordingly his legate, the cardinal of St. Sabine, bishop of Ostie, withdrew the interdict, but upon condition that the King Philip would have the cause of the divorce solemnly judged and pleaded *in six months, six weeks, six days, and six hours.*

Ingborge had the privilege of choosing the place of assemblage, and fixed on Soissons, where she appeared in the court, as also did the king. The case was proclaimed with solemnity and regularity, when a young stranger advanced and asked permission of the queen to undertake her defence. Philip himself could not refrain from admiring the lofty courage and simplicity of this unknown orator, who pleaded the cause with so much warmth and energy that the judges were persuaded, and the audience loudly applauded, but not before the mysterious defender had disappeared. Philip, foreseeing the issue of the proceedings, and not choosing

that royal majesty should be submitted to human judgment, hastened to the convent to which Ingborge had retired, embraced her, placed her on his horse behind him, and conducted her to Paris, where he publicly acknowledged her as wife and queen, in the year 1201.

Agnes de Meranie, to whom no slight merit was due for having fixed the heart of the inconstant Philip five years, was no sooner informed of her undeserved and unexpected disgrace than she retired to the Château de Poissy, where, in a few weeks, she sunk under the weight of her grief in giving birth to a son, who received the name of Tristan.

Innocent III. desiring to repair a part of the evil that had fallen upon her by the sentence of divorce, and considering that her marriage had been celebrated according to rule and in good faith, pronounced the two children she had by Philip, legitimate. They were Mary, who afterwards married Henry IV. duke of Brabant, and Tristan count of Clermont.

The political considerations which had obliged Philip to restore Ingborge, could have no influence over his sentiments towards her ; he for some time assumed an appearance of regard, but, in reality, his aversion was such that he again confined her in

the Château d'Etamps, in 1210. He even declared his determination to marry the daughter of the Count of Thuringia, provided he could obtain the Pope's consent to divorce Ingborge ; but his negotiation to that purpose met with a refusal, and Philip again reinstated Ingborge.

This ill-used queen survived the capricious monarch, who had rendered three amiable women most unhappy. After his death she retired to Corbeil, where she died in 1236, aged sixty-two years.

QUEEN AND REGENT BLANCHE, OF CASTILE.

(Reign of Louis VIII.)

THIS queen, so justly celebrated for her talents in the administration of government, as well as her lofty character, and the excellent education her son received under her direction, was grand-daughter of Eleonor of Guyenne. She was born at Burgos in Spain in 1185, and was the daughter of Alphonso IX., King of Castile, and of Eleanor daughter of Henry II., of England. The offer of the marriage was made by her grand-mother, Eleonor of Guyenne, Queen of England, who, after

the ceremony of betrothing, which took place at Burgos with great pomp, accompanied her to France. Alphonso himself conducted his daughter as far as the frontiers of France, where she was met by Matthew de Montmorenci, Constable of France, and other persons of consequence who were charged to receive her.

Blanche was surnamed *Candide* on account of her innocence, beauty, and youth, being only fifteen years of age when she arrived at the court of France to espouse the hereditary prince, Louis VIII., in the year 1200 ; but the kingdom being at that time under an interdict on account of Philip Augustus's divorce from Ingborge, her uncle John, King of England, conducted her to Normandy, which was at that time an English possession, and the marriage was solemnized by the archbishop of Bourges.

This union was the result of one of the articles in the treaty of Vernon, which had been concluded between the French and English, and as the messenger of peace Blanche was welcomed with enthusiasm. Her education had been carefully attended to, and her studies well directed ; independently of the attractions of her personal appearance she possessed the qualities of a wise politician, so that

her father-in-law, Philip Augustus, often consulted her.

It was a somewhat remarkable circumstance that caused Blanche, who was the youngest daughter of the house of Castile, to be preferred before her elder sister Uracca, who was still more beautiful; but after several conferences it was decided that the name of Uracca being less euphonious than that of Blanche, the latter would be more agreeable to the French people, and the ambassadors placed their choice on Blanche accordingly.

The alliance could hardly fail to be a happy one, Louis VIII. being of a mild and amiable disposition; moreover it was an inestimable benefit to the nation, because John, King of England, who tenderly loved Blanche, declared her the inheritor of all his French possessions, provided he died without legitimate children.

Philip Augustus's death, which occurred in 1223, placed Louis VIII. on the throne, and Blanche was crowned and consecrated with her husband at Rheims, in the midst of a most brilliant assemblage of princes and barons, and the event was celebrated by a succession of magnificent entertainments. On the return of the king and queen from this ceremony they were received at Paris with the greatest

enthusiasm, according to a French historian:—
“Toute la ville sortit au-devant des monarques ; les poètes chantaient des odes à sa louange, les musiciens faisaient retentir l’air du son de la vielle, des fifres, du tambour, du psaltérion, et de la harpe. Aristote se tut, Platon fit silence, et les philosophes déposèrent pour un moment l’esprit de dispute.”

During the reign of Philip Augustus, Blanche never quitted her husband during his trouble and isolation, or took any part in the government, being at that time remarkable only for her intellectual accomplishments and serious character.

The epoch in which she reigned in France, although one of religious enthusiasm and exaggeration, was a period in which chivalry flourished in all its brilliancy ; the youths of distinction were early instructed in bodily exercises, riding, hunting, and the use of arms, as well as the etiquette of the toilette and table, and the art of rendering themselves agreeable to the ladies ; and mothers accustomed their daughters to receive these respectful and delicate attentions with an affability which was not derogatory to modesty. The glory of the women consisted in excelling in the art of needlework, in embroidering rich carpets, and making the dresses of their husbands and male relatives.

The manufacture of confectionary and delicacies for the table was their amusement, as also the preparation of unguents and the extraction of balsams necessary to cure the wounds of the cavaliers. Nevertheless the intellectual part of the education of both sexes was neglected, and it was not at all uncommon to find cavaliers of rank and ladies of quality who were unable to read.

Having determined to undertake the unfortunate and absurd expedition against the Albigeois, Louis named Blanche regent before his departure. He was accompanied by Thibault count of Champagne, who was greatly enamoured of the queen, and had been most assiduous in his attentions to her; but he, feeling unable to support his absence from her, left the king's camp at Avignon, and returned to Paris. It has been said that Louis in a jealous transport having menaced the count of Champagne with his resentment, Thibault caused his sovereign to be poisoned. History does not, however, credit the truth of this event, there being no proof; nevertheless the king died shortly after the count's departure, in 1226, after a reign of three years. The will of Louis VIII. did not confer the regency upon the queen, but, animated by an ardent desire to govern, she immediately took steps to insure the sovereign authority to herself, and accordingly as-

sembled all the most powerful barons who were attached to her, amongst whom was Saint-Ange, the pope's legate. The bishops who attended on the king during his last moments at the Château Montpensier, attested upon oath that in dying he had invested her with that dignity, and pronounced her the guardian of his children. The count of Champagne, who was not included in the council assembled to decide the regency, displayed great discontent, either real or affected. This prince is represented as tall and handsome, very skilful in all chivalrous exercises, generous and pompous, inconstant and rash. He had great taste for poetry, which he cultivated with success; several of his attempts are still in existence: he moreover possessed a sweet voice, and wrote many agreeable sonnets.

It is true all Thibault's poems celebrated the beauty and worth of queen Blanche without naming her, and this discretion is a great proof that she was the object of his love; for if the count of Champagne had not addressed his poetical inspirations to the queen of France, he need not have concealed the name of his innamorata in his verses: however, there is no proof of a mutual affection, and if any existed it was so carefully veiled that, in defiance of the ob-

serving eyes of the court, the nature and circumstances of their attachment still remain a mystery.

Thibault united with several of the barons who objected to Blanche being invested with the government, and desired to transfer the regency on the young king's paternal uncle, Philip count of Boulogne; they accordingly refused to assist at the consecration of her son. The irritated regent assembled her troops and marched to the vacant episcopal see of Rheims, where her son, Louis IX., was crowned by the bishop of Soissons.

The league formed against the queen was very formidable; it was headed by Engerrand de Couci, and consisted, amongst others, of the counts of Dreux, Toulouse, and Ponthieu; Hugh de Lusignan, count of Marche; and Hugh de Chatillon, count of Saint Pol. Blanche did not long suffer the storm to gather; she placed herself with her son, then only thirteen years of age, at the head of a numerous army, and entered Brittany, which was the place of conspiracy. The rebellious lords, who were not prepared to repulse the regent's forces, deputed the count of Champagne to seek a reconciliation. No emissary could have been more agreeable to the queen, who after some reproaches granted his demand.

The discontented barons were, however, only tranquillized for a short period ; they again united to dispossess Blanche of the regency, and concerted their measures on this occasion with greater precaution. The queen used every endeavour to detach two of the confederates from the league formed against her ; these were the counts of Boulogne and Champagne. A little address enabled her to achieve her wishes : she persuaded Philip that he would gain nothing by the revolt, as they had determined to place Couci at their head, and that he was fighting against his nephew, without the hope of benefiting himself. As for Thibault, he was but a feeble enemy for Blanche ! One gracious epistle brought him to her feet ; not only did he abandon his friends, but revealed all their secrets to the lady of his heart, and drew over others by presents and promises.

The disappointed conspirators turned their fury against the count of Champagne, and did not even spare the reputation of the queen. They attempted to seize the king and regent on their route to Orleans, but Thibault secretly warned Blanche in time for them to retire to the fortress of Mont l'Heri ; from thence she sent information to the capital of the situation of the king, and the people

immediately flew to their succour and conducted them in triumph to Paris.

At length the league, calculating on the inconstant and volatile disposition of Thibault, endeavoured to seduce him from the queen by offering him Yolande, the daughter of the duke of Bretagne, who was at their head, in marriage. This princess was very beautiful and rich, and the count of Champagne accepted the offer. Blanche was only informed of this danger by the preparations for the marriage fête, when she hastily despatched the lord of La Chappelle to him with the following billet, which has been preserved amongst the ancient charters :—

“Sire Thibault de Champaigne, j’ai entendu que vous avez convenance et promis prendre à femme, la fille du Comte Pierre de Bretagne ; pourtant vous mande que si chier vous avez tout tant qu’aimez au royaume de France que ne le faciez pas. La raison pourquoi vous savez bien.”

Thus Blanche, in order to prevent an alliance which interfered with her projects and wounded her feelings, persuaded the unsteady Thibault that if he loved France he should not form an alliance that was agreeable to him ! Blanche did not overrate the powerful influence of her attractions ; her self-

love triumphed, and the marriage was set aside. After this affront, the league became still more inveterate against the count, and the people murmured at being governed by a Spanish woman and an Italian priest; for the cardinal St. Ange was invested with unlimited power, and honoured with the queen's especial favour. Blanche again quieted the storm with her usual ability; she promised honours to one, accorded a smile to another, and contrived to reconcile all her enemies within and without.

In 1227 she confirmed an alliance with the emperor Frederick II., made a truce with England, and, by a treaty with the duke of Brittany, engaged his daughter Yolande, whose rivalry she had formerly dreaded, for her son John's affianced wife.

After these skilful negotiations, Blanche turned her thoughts towards vanquishing her cousin-german, Raymond VII., count of Toulouse, who was still in rebellion, which she accomplished, and took him prisoner; she treated him with severe rigour, having obliged him to ask the king's pardon, after cruelly despoiling him of his wealth, which was not restored to his daughter but upon condition that she should marry one of her sons.

This unjust proceeding again excited the discon-

tent of the barons, who, in 1228, took up arms against the count of Champagne, then king of Navarre, whom they accused of having poisoned the king, Louis VIII., that he might live more freely with Blanche of Castile. Beset on all sides, Thibault had recourse to the queen, who summoned the nobles to hear their complaints; they boldly replied that they had taken up arms to render justice to themselves, not expecting to receive it at the hands of a woman who declared herself the protectress of her husband's murderer. The nature of this accusation rendered Thibault's cause that of the queen, who accompanied her troops to his succour, and met the enemy at the fortress of Bellesme, and this circumstance added to her other titles that of the "great captain."

The place was considered impregnable from the thickness of the walls, and another great obstacle was the severity of the weather, which caused the loss of several men and horses from extreme cold. Blanche did not yield to difficulties; she bestowed great attention on the soldiers, and did all in her power to preserve them from the rigour of the season; she caused large fires to be kept up, and gave high recompense to all who brought wood to the camp; she slept by the fire of the bivouac,

conversed with the troops, and encouraged her officers by her gracious manners.

Two assaults were successively made, and at length the great tower was dismantled, and the Bretons, who were sustained by a corps of English auxiliaries in defending the fortress, were obliged to surrender to the king and queen-mother, to whom is justly attributed the honour of this siege. She took the duke of Brittany, who headed the revolt, prisoner, but afterwards pardoned him; and then, after having taken Nantes and Acenis, she obliged the count of Marche to surrender in 1230.

But after having performed so much by the force of arms and by treaty, Blanche's glory was much tarnished by her ingratitude to the count of Champagne, whose services she appeared to have forgotten when he could be no longer useful to her; indeed she was desirous of preventing the possibility of injury from the man whom she should have least suspected.

Alix de Champagne, queen of Cyprus, daughter of Henry II., count of Champagne, king of Jerusalem, and elder brother of Thibault III., the father of Thibault, count of Champagne, laid claim to the province of Champagne, although ejected by the

Salique law ; the ungrateful Blanche sustained the pretensions of Alix, without examining whether they were justly founded. Thibault's right to the province was established ; but he was obliged to pay his niece an indemnity of two millions of livres. The count's resources were insufficient to raise this sum, and by the manner in which the queen offered to assist him in his embarrassment, there is certainly little proof of a correspondence of tender sentiments, she having thought more of the interests of her son than of those of the amorous Thibault. He possessed the provinces of Blois, Sancerre, Chartres, and Chateaudun, which she offered to purchase for the amount he owed to Alix. Thibault hesitated, but the queen urged it, till at length, says Mezeray, this poor prince once more surrendered to love, and replied with a sigh, " Madame, my soul, my body, and all my possessions, are yours ! " This was exactly what the dark policy of the regent desired ; she effectually succeeded in diminishing the count's power, which is an indelible stain on her memory.

Having appeased the disturbances caused by the jealousy of the nobles, and terminated the war against the Albigeois, the regent had an opportunity of displaying her high capacity for govern-

ing. She profited by the repose which France then enjoyed, to finish the education of her son, king Louis, whom she surrounded with the most learned men in the kingdom. Posterity has ranked the education of Louis IX. amongst Blanche's highest titles to glory.

At length Louis's majority terminated the regency in 1235, and Blanche put the finishing stroke to her work by marrying him to Margaret of Provence, and augmenting his territories by the addition of that rich province. She also married his two brothers, Robert and Alphonso, the former to Matilda, daughter to the duke of Brabant, with the title of Count d'Artois, and the other to Jane of Toulouse, with the title of Count de Toulouse: but this young court, under the severe eye of Blanche, did not yield to any superfluous expenses, or the ruinous and luxurious habits common at courts; all being remarkably pious, especially the king.

Although Louis held the reins of government, Blanche could not entirely relinquish the charms of domination, and the king, grateful for her sage advice, suffered her to participate in the royal authority; nevertheless the queen was so jealous of her influence over him, that she was often uneasy at his affection for his young wife, and used every endea-

your to prevent their enjoying much of each other's society.

The king and queen-mother, however, governed the state with much wisdom, and the country for some time enjoyed peace and happiness, when Louis fell dangerously ill at Pontoise, upon which he made a vow that if he recovered he would form a crusade; he was cured, and, unfortunately for France, accomplished his fatal promise. Although a new regency for Blanche was the result of this useless enterprise, she nevertheless exhausted all her powers of persuasion to prevent her son from undertaking the expedition, but without success: the king departed in 1248, leaving the government in the hands of his mother. She accompanied the king, queen, and princes as far as Marseilles, and added the prayers of a mother to the pontifical benediction of Pope Innocent IV.

Blanche next occupied herself in repressing disorders; one of which was the scandalous oppression of the French people under the yoke of the ecclesiastics, who were the lords of the earth. The following occurrence, which is attributed to this queen, does her much honour.

In 1252 the Chapter of Notre Dame de Paris, who possessed the power of life and death over the

peasantry subjected to their jurisdiction, had thrown several serfs of Châteney, who were incapable of paying a most burthensome contribution, into the prisons of the officiality. These unhappy people were so closely confined that they could with difficulty move in their narrow prisons, and were even deprived of air. Blanche, touched with compassion for them, sent to request their liberation out of consideration for herself. The canons haughtily replied, that no person had a right to interfere with their affairs, and that they would kill their vassals if they thought fit; and to brave the queen and punish these unfortunate persons for the protection she had shown them, arrested the wives and children of their prisoners, and stowed them all in cells together; by which several died from want of air, and infection.

The queen's indignation was roused at this insolence and barbarity; and, proceeding with her guards to the prison, desired them to break open the doors of the cells, and lest the fear of ecclesiastical influence should cause them to disobey, she gave the example by striking the first blow herself; the doors were soon thrown open, and exposed to view corpses heaped together, and disfigured beings who had hardly strength left to enjoy the pure air, or to throw themselves at the feet of their benefac-

tress. From that fortunate period, the feudal yoke of the clergy was less heavy, and peasants were permitted to purchase their liberty.

During the second regency of this illustrious queen, who was governing the French nation in peace and wisdom, she had the grief of learning the defeat, at Mansorah, and the captivity of the king and his brothers the princes, on the coast of Africa, which occurred in the year 1249. Plunged in the deepest affliction, she exhausted the treasury to procure Louis liberty, and sent him eleven waggons loaded with silver to assist in effecting it. In the trouble which this disaster caused her, she had the weakness to permit the union of the *Pastoureaux*, which were bands under the direction of an apostate monk, who assembled and armed all the vagabonds in France; and, under the pretext of going to assist in the deliverance of the king, committed the greatest excesses, pillaging and setting fire to villages, till the queen was obliged to send a force to put down these dangerous marauders.

During this grievous position of affairs, Pope Innocent IV. having published the necessity of a new crusade against the emperor Conrad, the queen forbid all persons to enroll themselves in this war, for France required all its resources; her two

sons, the counts of Anjou and Poitou, having arrived with a letter from the king, requiring more money and succour; and although Blanche lamented the cause which obliged her to issue the order, she nevertheless published it, announcing that all who did not set out immediately for the Holy Land would have their houses and lands confiscated.

So anxious was Blanche to release her son from the power of the Saracens, that she was even disposed to resign Normandy to Henry III., king of England, to whom she had applied for assistance, and who asked that province as the price of his aid; but the barons succeeded in dissuading her from rendering this sacrifice to maternal affection.

Blanche's troubles increased daily; the king was pining in captivity, and her second son, Robert, count of Artois, had been slain in Egypt; so that, sinking under the accumulated weight of these evils, she was attacked with a violent fever, which brought her to the tomb at Melun, whither she had been removed for change of air by order of her medical attendants. Some days before her death she assumed the habit of the order of Citeaux.

She was interred with unusual magnificence; her body was clothed with all the insignia of royalty, and the crown placed upon her head; she was

seated on a throne of gold with her face uncovered, and thus transported to her last resting-place by the principal nobles of the court.

Only four out of the eleven children she had borne Louis VIII. survived her. She had two daughters, one of whom, Isabella, was the founder and abbess of Long Champ. Her sons were, Saint Louis, king of France; Robert, count of Artois; Charles, count of Anjou and king of Naples; Alphonso, count of Auvergne; Jean; Stephen; Philip; and two others, who died very young.

Blanche of Castile was deeply regretted; for her death was a most unfortunate event for France, at that time deprived of her king, and in a most critical position. So high was the opinion entertained of her by her successors, that several of the queen dowagers of France assumed the surname of "*Blanche*," as the Roman emperors did that of "*Augustus*."

QUEEN MARGARET OF PROVENCE.

(Reign of Louis IX.)

LOUIS IX., commonly called Saint Louis on account of his virtue and piety, was married to Mar-

garet, daughter of Raymond Berenger III., count of Provence, and of Beatrice of Savoy, at Sens, in the year 1234. The ambassadors who were sent to conduct Margaret received a promise of twenty thousand francs, as well as the rich province of Provence, for her dower; her journey through all the towns of France was a series of entertainments, festivity reigned throughout the kingdom, and the marriage was celebrated with great splendour.

They were both young, Louis being nineteen, and Margaret only fifteen years of age. This princess had no ambition beyond the attainment of her husband's affection; and she was fortunate in her desires, for Louis was fondly attached to her, his love was the boundary of her wishes, and this model of wives retained till her death the same honourable sentiments. Margaret was amiable and sensible; she received a most careful education, and had been surrounded by the most intelligent and brilliant characters at the court of her father, whose generosity in the patronage of poets and artists was universally known; but she never displayed any proof of extraordinary talent, perhaps from a sentiment of modesty, which she no doubt considered one of the first merits.

Louis IX. justly appreciated his wife's amiable

disposition ; nevertheless Margaret, who was mild and passive, could not conquer a sentiment of well-founded dislike to her mother-in-law, whose severe and imperious character she feared, having been the object of her frequent persecutions. Blanche, confident of the authority she possessed over the mind of her son, and with a view of depriving the queen of all influence over him at the court, being jealous of the familiarity of the young pair, endeavoured to restrain their intimacy ; and this interference obliged them to employ various stratagems to obtain an occasional meeting. It is asserted that while residing for a short period at Pontoise, Blanche, as usual, obliged them to occupy separate apartments, and Louis took occasion during his mother's short absences to visit his young wife, who sometimes also stole furtively into his room ; and on the approach of the queen-mother the ushers struck the door with a cane, or gave some other signal, upon which they immediately separated.

“Quand le roi chevauchait par son royaume, Blanche le faisait séparer de le Royne son épouse ; ils n'étaient jamais logés ensemblement.”

One day Margaret, being very ill in bed, desired to be gratified with the conversation of her husband ;

when the queen-mother entered the room, and taking her son by the hand, led him gently towards the door. Margaret, losing patience, cried out, "Will you not, then, suffer me to see my lord and husband the king, either in life or death?"

This inquisitorial tyranny augmented the conjugal affection of the young sovereigns; and it was with inexpressible delight that Margaret found she should be released from it by her approaching departure with the king for the Holy Land, as the law, as well as her own wishes, joined her fate with that of her husband, and she prepared with gaiety for the voyage.

To her natural simplicity and candour Margaret also added firmness and devotion, which the reverses Saint Louis encountered in Palestine developed most forcibly.

She was pregnant when the king was taken prisoner at Saint John d'Acre, in 1250, and was informed of this new catastrophe before her accouchement at Damietta, which place the king had confided to her government, and where she was besieged by the Saracens. It would be difficult to paint the desolation of the queen on learning the captivity of her husband, and the dread of being

exposed to the brutality of the licentious Asiatic soldiery threw her into despair.

The cavaliers and soldiers from Genoa and Pisa, who formed part of the expedition, were enclosed in the town with her, and being without food, the auxiliaries desired to quit the place ; but Margaret summoned their captains, and promised to buy a sufficient quantity of provisions if they would remain in Damietta, which was the king's last resource. The town was more and more surrounded by enemies, and in the difficult position in which she was placed the queen feared the consequences of an assault ; she therefore retained but one soldier near her person, who was a distinguished chevalier, upwards of eighty years of age. In one of her moments of alarm she threw herself at his knees and entreated him to grant the request she was about to make: the old cavalier swore to do so. "Sir chevalier," said the queen, "by the faith you owe me, I conjure you to cut off my head if Damietta is taken by the Saracens." "I intended to do so," replied the veteran. No record in history can afford a more heroic incident. Some hours after Margaret gave birth to a son, whom she called Tristan, on account of the unhappy

circumstances which occurred at the period of his birth.

The king, Louis IX., whose magnanimity astonished even his enemies, refused to be ransomed with money.

To increase the evils, the Genoese and Pisanese, seeing the unfortunate turn of affairs and the captivity of the king, prepared to abandon the town and the army. The queen entreated them to defer the accomplishment of this design, and finding her tears and prayers useless, she offered them the enormous sum of 360,000 livres, a part of which was the produce of the sale of her jewels to the Jews, upon which they agreed to remain. Her devotion was rewarded, for Damietta, which she had so intrepidly preserved, was taken as ransom for Saint Louis, who thus owed his liberty to his affectionate wife.

Although her health was not re-established, Margaret immediately proceeded to Saint John d'Acre in 1252, where she was reunited to the king, after a long and cruel separation.

Shortly after, Louis received tidings of his mother's death, and determined to return to France.

The Sire de Joinville, having observed the queen in tears in consequence of the event, frankly said,

“Qu’il était bien vrai qu’on ne devoit mie croire femme à pleurer, puisque le devil qu’elle menait était pour la dame qu’elle haïssait le plus en ce monde.” But the queen, equally candid, replied, that it was not for the loss of her mother-in-law that she lamented, but that she was grieved to see the king plunged into such profound affliction, and that, in fact, she wept because her husband wept.

In 1254 the king and queen embarked for France, with the remains of the army. The navigation was difficult. While proceeding under full sail towards the isle of Cyprus, the vessel struck violently on a small desert island, and was very much shattered. The cavaliers all recommended the king and queen to abandon the ship; but as it was the only one capable of conveying them all, and as Louis was unwilling to embark in a smaller vessel and leave a part of his followers behind, he determined to proceed. In this critical position Margaret had recourse to a vow, and obtained her husband’s permission to offer a silver lamp to Saint Nicholas. After a long and dangerous voyage the royal family arrived at Marseilles, and from thence proceeded to Paris, where Louis occupied himself with studying the happiness of his people.

Margaret devoted herself to religious duties: she

built convents and made pilgrimages, and the king, who often joined her in her pious occupations, resolved to abdicate the throne and retire to a Franciscan monastery; but Margaret dissuaded him from this project, and France owes a debt of gratitude to the queen for having preserved this excellent king to his people, at a time when good princes were so few.

Notwithstanding her elevated and religious ideas, Margaret always retained her simplicity of manners, and it was this simplicity which once caused her to embrace a woman of bad fame, as it was customary at mass, on presenting the offering, to give the kiss of peace to those near her. When she was informed of her mistake, she complained to the king, who assigned a particular costume to that class of persons.

Whether Louis IX. had little confidence in Margaret's talents, or that he did not wish to burthen her with the affairs of state, is uncertain, but he did not appoint her regent on undertaking his last fatal crusade, in the year 1270, during which he died of the plague at Tunis the same year.

He assigned Margaret, for her dower, Corbeil, Meulan, Vernon, Pontoise, Etamps, Dourdans, la Ferte Alps, and an annuity of 219 livres, seven

sous, and six deniers, payable by the Jews every three months. She might have constituted a fine estate by claiming Provence from her brother-in-law Charles of Anjou, king of Naples, whom she suffered to ravage that beautiful country, for she was so devoted to religion that earthly things had no longer any charm for her.

Margaret died in 1295, aged sixty-six years, in the convent of the Cordeliers de Saint Claire, which she founded in the faubourg Saint Marcel, and in favour of which she made a will; all her valuable effects she left to different hospitals. Her body was removed to the royal sepulchre of Saint Denis.

Margaret was the mother of six sons and five daughters, but only four of her children survived her. Her second son, Philip le Hardi, succeeded Saint Louis, the eldest having died at the age of sixteen: she had also John Tristan, born during the siege of Damietta; Peter, count of Chartres; and Robert, count of Clermont. One of her daughters, Isabella, was queen of Navarre; another, Agnes, married Robert II., duke of Burgundy; Blanche was wedded to Ferdinand de la Cerda, son of the king of Castile; and Margaret was duchess of Brabant.

The many excellent qualities of Margaret of

Provence, added to those of the virtuous Louis, ensured to France, during their long union, fifteen years of repose, which it much needed.

QUEEN ISABELLA OF ARRAGON.

(Reign of Philip III.)

ISABELLA, daughter of James I., king of Arragon, and of Yolande of Hungary, had not attained her fifteenth year when she was married to Philip le Hardi at Clermont, in 1362. She brought as dower the counties of Beziers and Carcassone to the crown.

Louis IX. having taken his sons with him to the last crusade, Isabella accompanied her husband, and courageously supported the fatigues of the expedition, although of an exceedingly delicate constitution. Her father-in-law, when dying, recommended Philip to return to France and take possession of his government, which he determined upon doing immediately. The fleet sailed by the way of Sicily, and was overtaken by a storm on the coast of Trapani, where eighteen large vessels and several smaller ones, containing altogether about

two thousand persons, and a great portion of the equipage of the army, were wrecked within sight of the port. Fortunately the king of France, his brother and his brother-in-law the kings of Sicily and Navarre, their queens, and several noblemen, had time to disembark.

Philip was detained in Sicily by weakness, from the effects of the plague he had caught at Tunis, as well as by the illness of his brother-in-law Thibault, king of Navarre, who died fifteen days after landing, and whose wife followed him to the tomb a few days after ; as also did his uncle the count of Toulouse, and Jane his wife. Queen Isabella did not long survive them : in fording a small river near Cozenza, in Calabria, she fell from her horse, which, she being pregnant, occasioned her a premature delivery, that caused her death in 1271.

Thus the new king entered France with the sad remains of his father, Saint Louis ; the queen Isabella, his wife ; Tristan, his brother ; the king of Navarre, his brother-in-law ; Alphonso, his uncle ; and Jane, countess of Toulouse, his aunt. His reign commenced in the midst of funeral gloom, for there were few persons who had not lost some part of their families in this fatal expedition.

Isabella was the mother of four princes, of whom

one, Philip-le-Bel, succeeded to the throne; two others, who died young; and Charles de Valois, who was the royal branch from which thirteen French monarchs sprung.

The king and court deeply regretted this amiable princess, who was universally beloved. She was buried at Saint Denis.

QUEEN MARY OF BRABANT.

PHILIP III.'s second wife was Mary, daughter of Henry III., duke of Brabant, and Alice of Burgundy. The duke himself accompanied his daughter to France, and the marriage was celebrated at the Château de Vincennes in the year 1274. Twelve months after the queen was crowned in the Sainte Chapelle of Paris, by the Archbishop of Rheims.

Mary is represented as being equally beautiful and intelligent. The duke of Brabant was one of the best poets which that epoch afforded, and the queen, inheriting her father's taste, cultivated poetry with much assiduity. A lady of distinction at her court, called Blanche, who was her intimate friend,

partook of her inclination, and both encouraged the poets of the day by their counsel and patronage. Adenez le Roix, a contemporary author, acknowledges, in the commencement of his romance entitled "*Cléomades*," that he is indebted to Mary and her friend for all that is good in that work.

Philip was much attached to Mary, and her combined advantages of personal beauty and intellectual talent rendered her so attractive, that he invariably gave her admission in the councils of state. But history does not give Mary credit for having such excellent qualities as her personal appearance betokened.

The king had a favourite named Peter la Brosse, who by the favour of his sovereign had, from valet-de-chambre and barber to St. Louis; been elevated to the eminent position of prime minister. This man, who had been accustomed during Philip's three years of widowhood to enjoy his entire confidence, was jealous of the power of the young queen, who frequently obtained favours without condescending to ask them through him. Mary, who was conscious of the artful and intriguing character of this fellow, whom she despised, used every effort to dislodge him from his honourable post, and each took occasion to undermine the other. La Brosse en-

deavoured to persuade the king that Mary had expressed herself indignant at the idea of Isabella's sons taking the precedence of those which she might have; and at this time the Prince Louis, eldest son of Isabella of Arragon, was attacked with a malignant fever, of which he died, and some livid spots on his skin indicated that his death had been occasioned by poison. The queen accused La Brosse, and remarked that all who attended on the young prince during his illness were persons chosen by him, and she demanded that they should be interrogated, and imprisoned until the frightful mystery attending Louis's death should be solved. La Brosse, on the contrary, did not hesitate to insinuate to the king that the prince had been Mary's victim, and that his three brothers would meet with the same fate, to make way for her children.

It would be difficult to paint the agony and distraction of the monarch: a horrible crime had been committed in the bosom of his family, his first-born was the victim, the accused was his cherished wife, the accuser a minister, his friend and confidant: his embarrassment was extreme; he employed menaces, promises, and even had recourse to religious persons, whom he believed could learn the truth by a miracle from heaven.

After having exhausted all research and conjecture, Philip resolved to apply to a celebrated sorceress who resided at Nivelles in Brabant; and in this act must be recognised the queen's influence, the king having preferred a person who was living under the dominion of her father, before the numerous individuals who enjoyed the repute of prophetesses in France. He accordingly sent the abbot of St. Denis and the bishop of Bayeux to Nivelles to consult this oracle. The prophetess eluded the question by an evasive answer, and the bishop of Bayeux, who was related to La Brosse, informed the king that he could not reveal the declaration of the sorceress of Nivelles, because she had spoken under the secrecy of confession. The king was not satisfied with this answer to his application, and immediately sent the bishop of Dôle, and a Knight-Templar, Arnould de Vismale, to Nivelles, with a repetition of his question. Their reply was favourable to the queen, the sorceress having declared that the poison was administered by a man who was always about the king's person. Philip, who placed great faith in those absurdities and impositions, was delighted to find his wife innocent; he however suspended his resentment against La

Brosse, not considering the evidence sufficiently conclusive.

But the jealousy and enmity of the queen and nobles were not long dormant. Shortly after this event a man, whose name and quality were unknown, arrived at a monastery in Melun, where he fell dangerously ill; none knew from whence he came, but, in dying, he confided a letter to one of the monks, with strict injunctions to place it in the hands of the king himself. The monk performed his commission, and Philip convoked his council at Vincennes and communicated the contents of the letter, which bore the seal of La Brosse, and submitted it to their decision. La Brosse was arrested and imprisoned; his enemies were his judges, he was convicted of treason, of holding private communication with the enemies of France, and of speculation. Of what crime is a disgraced favourite not capable? He was accordingly hanged at Paris.

The people, to whom the accusation and execution became known at the same moment, murmured violently, and the king, who already regretted the hasty manner in which his favourite had been disposed of, displayed great displeasure towards the queen, whose name was still not entirely freed from

the stain of murder ; he even placed guards at the door of her apartment, and forbid her communication with any one but her own immediate attendants. Fortunately for her, her brother, the Duke John of Brabant, hastened to France to maintain his sister's innocence by close combat, and to prove by force of arms that she had no hand in poisoning the young Prince Louis ; and, according to the existing law, if her champion had fallen, she would have been burned to death. The combat took place ; the opponent who was chosen to meet the duke was overcome, and the vanquishing arm of the Duke of Brabant proclaimed the innocence of the queen.

The death of La Brosse was the salvation of Mary of Brabant ; but few historians spare her the disgrace of having been the author of that apocryphal letter which brought the unfortunate man to an ignominious death, and by which she revenged herself on him, whose only fault, perhaps, was balancing his own influence with that of his ambitious queen. She did not enjoy her power long, for the death of the king, in the year 1285, obliged her to renounce that authority to which she affixed so much value. She retired to Picardy, but little more is known of her than that she founded some

monasteries, which, according to the idea then in existence, was a certain preservative against the infernal fires, and an expiation for the greatest crimes.

Mary fixed her last retreat at Mural, near Melun, where she died in the year 1321, at an advanced age, after having devoted her latter years to the education of her granddaughter, Jane of France, queen of Navarre.

Her body was interred in the convent of the Cordeliers of Paris, and her heart deposited in that of the Jacobins. She had three children by Philip : Louis, count d'Evreux ; and two daughters, both of whom were queens, one having married Edward I., king of England, and the other Rodolph, duke of Austria and king of Hungary.

QUEEN JANE OF NAVARRE.

(Reign of Philip IV.)

At the age of fifteen, Philip IV., surnamed Le Bel, was married in 1284 to Jane of Navarre, when she was only thirteen years old, by which union the young prince acquired the title of king of Navarre. This queen owed her accession to that

kingdom to a singular event. She was the daughter of Henry I., king of Navarre and count of Champagne, and her young brother, Thibault, was the heir; but the governor of the prince, who was amusing him by throwing him backwards and forwards to the nurse, let the child fall over a high balcony, and he was killed on the spot, in 1273. The governor in despair stabbed himself, and fell dead upon the body of his young master.

Jane was two years and a half old when this circumstance occurred, and her father had her immediately proclaimed hereditary queen of Navarre, in opposition to the ministers of the state, who were desirous of establishing the Salique law. Her father, Henry I., when dying, recommended his wife Blanche d'Artois to marry Jane to the crown of France, but the nobles of Navarre were desirous that she should espouse the king of Arragon; the queen-mother therefore, to avoid a dispute, resolved to remove with her daughter to the court of France, where they were generously received by Philip III. The evasion of these princesses created a civil war in Navarre, but peace was soon restored to that kingdom by the policy of Philip and the valour of the French soldiers.

That monarch bestowed great attention on Jane's

education, which was suitable to her rank ; and as an acknowledgment, and out of gratitude for his generous care, as well as respect for the memory of her father, she married the son of her royal host.

According to the wish of the king, Jane retained the government of Navarre, and, some years after her marriage, succeeded in expelling the Arragonese and Castilians from that kingdom, in which she established sub-governors, who acted under her direction : she also did the same in Champagne. On the death of Philip-le-Hardi, which occurred in 1285, Philip IV. and Jane were crowned and consecrated at Rheims by Peter Barbet, archbishop of that town. The king was prodigal in his testimonials of esteem for his wife, in whom he had great confidence ; he not only increased her territories of Brie and Champagne in 1288, but, a few years later, when attacked by a dangerous malady, made a will in which he declared Jane the guardian of his children and regent of the kingdom so long as she remained a widow : she did not, however, survive him.

Jane profited much by the careful education she had received, having been an enthusiastic patroness of the fine arts, which she cultivated with success.

Endowed with superior genius and rare talents, she actively directed her thoughts towards wise enterprises. It was this queen who founded the celebrated college of Navarre at Paris, and munificently remunerated the professors whom she established in it; she also built the town of Puente-la-Reyna, in Navarre, an almshouse at Château Thierry, and several other places of public utility.

In the year 1299 she accompanied the king in his expedition against Flanders, and, after the defeat of those revolted vassals, they went with a large retinue to visit Bruges. In the entertainments that were given the king and queen by the inhabitants, Jane saw, with astonishment and mortification, that the ladies were magnificently attired in valuable stuffs and covered with diamonds. "I thought," said she, "that I should have appeared here as the only queen; but I find six hundred women who by the richness of their apparel can dispute that title with me." This ostentatious display of the Flemings, which was done with a view of rendering honour to the royal pair, excited the queen's envy, and she was so unworthy as to persuade the king to despoil them of a part of their goods, which culpable advice he condescended to follow.

The expenses of the town of Bruges for the re-

ception of the king had been considerable, and the appearance of so much wealth was an alluring bait for the financiers of the king, who were charged to levy most burthensome taxes; the Flemings, accustomed to be treated with moderation by their princes, murmured, and the governor imprisoned several of the most respectable townsmen, which so irritated the populace, that men, women, and children united to attack the French governor and his people, and upwards of five hundred Frenchmen fell on that unfortunate day; an event which perhaps would never have occurred had not the cupidity of the queen incited Philip to perform acts of injustice. But great eulogy is due to Jane of Navarre, for the wisdom with which she governed, and the energy she displayed, when the Count of Bar made an irruption into Champagne, in the year 1297; this spirited woman placed herself at the head of her troops and marched them to the attack, when she took the count prisoner and conveyed him in triumph to Paris.

Jane of Navarre was the mother of three kings of France,—Louis X., Philip V., and Charles IV.; she had also Isabella, who married the weak and unfortunate Edward II., king of England; and three other children who died young,—Robert, Ma -

garet, and Blanche. This queen died, aged thirty-three, at the Château of Vincennes, in the year 1305: she was interred in the choir of the church of the Cordeliers de Paris; but the church and tomb were destroyed by fire in 1580.

QUEEN MARGARET OF BURGUNDY.

(Reign of Louis X.)

IN the year 1305 Louis-le-Mutin, or the Mutinous, then only fifteen years of age, was married to Margaret of Burgundy, who was still younger than himself. She was the daughter of Robert II., duke of Burgundy, and titular king of Thessalonica, and of Agnes, daughter of St. Louis. Margaret was handsome, spirited, and full of levity; moreover she was the mistress of her own actions in a court in which gallantry was extended almost to libertinism, and powerfully contrasted with the regular and virtuous habits which were observed during the reign of her grandmother Margaret of Provence.

Friar Maillard, in one of his sermons, censured the dissolute manners of that court in the following coarse and pointed terms: “ N'est-il pas vrai, mes-

demoiselles, qu'il se trouve parmi vous plus de femmes débauchées, que de femmes honnêtes? . . . D'ailleurs vos pères, les bourgeois de Paris, ont coutume de faire gagner la dot à leurs filles à la sueur de leur corps. Ally à tous les diables."

The same gross and free style was adopted by the troubadours and poets throughout France; and a contemporary writer, in an epistle addressed to his countrywomen, offers them advice by which some idea may be formed of the manners of that period. He recommends them not to run in going to church, or to suffer their bosoms and arms to be too much exposed; neither to swear nor drink, and to give up the habit of lying; to return the salute of the poor; to go to the altar without laughing, and to be careful not to soil their fingers too much in eating (forks not having been brought into use until the reign of Henry III.).

Queen Margaret, who was introduced to this corrupted court at a tender age, acquired its voluptuous tastes and manners, and at length, with her sisters-in-law, Jane of Burgundy, wife of Philip, count of Poitiers, and Blanche, wife of Charles, count of Marche, set an example of irregularity and disorder, which is almost unprecedented in the annals of history.

These princesses bribed their ushers to admit into their apartments two Norman gentlemen, named Philip and Gautier d'Annoy, who were equerries to the king, and possessed no particular personal advantages, which Louis and Charles did in a remarkable degree; but Margaret and Blanche nevertheless had an intrigue with them, and in order to keep it a secret from the court, requested permission to pass the summer season at the Abbey of Maubuisson, near Pontoise; where, less subject to observation, and surrounded by confidential persons, they could plunge unreservedly into their disgraceful excesses. Each night the equerries scaled the walls of the abbey, and clandestinely entered the apartments of the queen and countess.

At length one of Margaret's maids of honour, Mademoiselle de Morfontaine, who had been some time affianced to Philip d'Annoy, perceived his coldness, and was tempted to watch his movements; when she observed him enter the chamber of the queen. She mentioned the circumstance to her confessor at Maubuisson, who advised this young girl to discover the whole. Upon Mademoiselle de Morfontaine's evidence the brothers were surprised and arrested in the princesses' apartments, and immediately condemned for high treason. They

were first mutilated, then flayed alive, after which they were beheaded, and their bodies hung upon gibbets at Pontoise, in 1315. One of the ushers, in his confession before being strangled, declared that Margaret and Blanche had used every possible means to conquer the respect and timidity of these unfortunate young men.

The queen and the countess of Marche, who were found guilty of adultery, had their heads shaved, and were imprisoned in the Château Gail-
lard d'Andelys.* But Louis could not forgive the indignity and dishonour which his queen had heaped upon him, and shortly after her imprisonment he ordered her to be strangled with her own shroud. She was put to death at the age of twenty-six, in the year 1315, and buried in the church of the Cordeliers de Vernon. Margaret left one daughter, Jane, countess d'Evreux and queen of Navarre.

Blanche, countess of Marche, and the criminal companion of her sister-in-law, queen Margaret, was the daughter of Otho IV., count palatine of Burgundy, and though spared from suffering an ignominious death, nevertheless endured a long

* Founded by Richard Cœur-de-Lion, on a spot where it is said to have rained blood,—CHATEAUBRIAND.

captivity, from which she never was released but to take the veil. This princess is reputed to have been the most beautiful woman in France when she married Charles le Bel, count of Marche, in the year 1307. In 1315 she was confined at the Château Gaillard d'Andelys; and nine years after, on the accession of her husband, Charles IV., to the throne of France, he solicited Pope John XXII. to dissolve his marriage; to which step he was urged by the barons, who were desirous that he should form another alliance for the purpose of securing male heirs to the throne. The pontiff readily acceded to this reasonable request; but although her marriage was cancelled, Blanche was not permitted the enjoyment of liberty; and a translation to the Château Gauray was all the change which was granted to this prisoner, who, being weary of her monotonous and sad position, and finding that neither tears nor protestations would rekindle any sentiment of either passion or pity in the heart of her husband, entreated to be allowed to exchange the captivity of the prison for that of the cloister; and after twelve years of rigorous confinement, took the veil in the abbey of Maubuisson, where she did penance for her former faults in the spot that had been the theatre of her pleasures and

her crimes, and near the place in which the companion of her guilt had expiated his audacious love by an awful death.

During her conventual seclusion, which lasted but one year, she had the mortification of witnessing the accession of two strangers to the throne which her irregularities had deprived her of; so that her last days were poisoned by chagrin. She died in 1326, leaving no posterity, her two children having preceded her to the tomb.

QUEEN CLEMENCE OF HUNGARY.

AFTER the death of his first wife, Margaret of Burgundy, Louis X. was solicited by the nobles of his court to seek a more worthy alliance; he accordingly asked the hand of Clemence, daughter of Charles Robert King of Hungary, and a descendant of the house of Hapsburg, which was accorded; and Clemence was conducted to France, and crowned at Rheims by the archbishop, Robert de Courtenay, in the year 1315. Louis died at Vincennes a few months after his marriage, leaving Clemence pregnant; and the barons conferred the regency on the king's brother, Philip, until her child should be born to decide the succession. But

five months after Louis's death, the queen's grief for the loss of her husband caused the premature birth of John, whose reign and life lasted but five days ; accordingly, by virtue of the Salique law, the crown was adjudged to Philip.

Louis-le-Hutin left his wife extensive domains in Gatinais, and all the confiscated property of Enguerrand de Marigny, who had been executed for extortion while holding the office of superintendent of finances.

Clemence, who during her short reign was greatly beloved by the French, retired to the Hôtel du Temple, where she died young in the year 1328, surrounded by numerous attached followers. She was interred in the church of the Jacobins.

QUEEN JANE OF BURGUNDY.

(Reign of Philip V.)

THIS princess was the eldest daughter of Othon IV., Count Palatine of Burgundy, and of Mahault Countess of Artois, and sister to Blanche Countess of Marche.

She was married to Philip Count of Poitiers, at Corbeil, in 1306 ; but was affianced to him in 1294, at Vincennes, when only two years of age.

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Her husband, who was of a serious character, lived in retirement, and occupied himself with the study of poetry and the belles-letters; but Jane, who lived on terms of intimacy with Queen Margaret of France and her sister Blanche, imbibed their licentious habits, and, at the age of fourteen, was accused with them of adultery.

Philip, who was less severe than his brothers Louis X. and Charles, confined his wife in the château of Dourdain for twelve months; at the expiration of which time he was either moved by a sentiment of self-love, or by his naturally kind disposition, to pardon and recall her.

The death of his nephew, John, surnamed the Posthumous, having entitled Philip to the throne, he conducted his wife to Rheims, where she was crowned and consecrated with him by the archbishop, Robert de Courtenay, in 1317. Jane lived on good terms with the king until his death, which occurred in 1322; but her widowhood is stained by crimes of the most revolting nature, and the scenes which took place at the abbey of Maubuisson were enacted at her residence, the Hôtel de Nesle, with double depravity. The towers of the Hôtel de Nesle were bathed by the waters of the Seine, and all those who had the misfortune to attract Jane's

criminal regards were invited to the château, and afterwards precipitated from the heights into the water, to prevent a recital of her infamy. A young student, named John Buridan, who was afterwards rector of the university, recounts in his memoirs the circumstance of his having, in passing the hôtel, engaged the notice of the queen, who caused him to be conducted to her; and relates also how he was so fortunate as to escape the cruel treatment which had befallen so many others.

Jane died in 1329, at Roye, in Picardy, after having founded the college of Burgundy, in Paris. She was buried at the convent of the Cordeliers of Paris, beside the heart of her husband. This queen gave birth to five children: Louis, who died young; Jane, who espoused Eudes IV., Duke of Burgundy; Margaret, married to the Count of Flanders; Isabella, Dauphine of Viennois; and Blanche, Abbess of Longchamp.

QUEEN MARY OF LUXEMBURG.

(Reign of Charles-le-Bel.).

AFTER the pope, John XXII., had pronounced the divorce of Blanche of Burgundy, Charles IV., who was elevated to the throne by the death of his two

brothers, obtained the hand of Mary of Luxemburg, daughter of Henry VII., Emperor of Germany, and of Margaret of Brabant. This princess, who had been educated by the inmates of the Dominican convent, exchanged the sombre dress of that order for the royal mantle ; and was crowned with great splendour at Paris, in the year 1323, in presence of her brother, the King of Bohemia, and her uncle, the Archbishop of Treves.

But she enjoyed the dignity but a short period, having lost her diadem and her life by the overturning of her vehicle in going to the royal palace of Montargis, on which occasion she was dangerously injured, and died in her accouchement at Issoudun in the year 1324, being accompanied to the tomb by her infant ; they were buried in the church of Saint Dominick de Montargis.

Mary was only eighteen years of age when her death occurred.

QUEEN JANE D'EVREUX.

CHARLES, who was still young when Mary of Luxemburg died, determined to remarry, with the view of perpetuating his dynasty ; he therefore selected

his cousin-german, Jane d'Evreux, whom he espoused in 1325.

This union was advantageous in many respects, and the king's prospects, in regard of the kingdom of Navarre, powerfully contributed to decide him in his choice. Jane's dower was twenty thousand francs in specie, and an annuity of seven hundred livres.

Three years after their marriage, Charles died, leaving the queen enceinte, and the succession to the crown of France was deferred, as in the time of Clemence of Hungary, until the birth of a girl, which took place in 1328, and left the throne vacant for Philip de Valois. After the regency of Blanche of Castille, few queens held that power until the period when it was bestowed upon Isabella of Bavaria. During that interval, the Queens of France usually occupied themselves with the acquirements and recreations suitable to their sex.

The queen retired to her own domains in Briecomte-Robert, where, during the many reigns which she lived to witness, she was deservedly respected and esteemed by all those princes.

Jane d'Evreux was particularly attached to the Carthusian friars of the Château de Vauvert, and greatly enlarged their monastery; she daily visited

its inmates, and assisted to prepare their food, which she served herself to the sick who were confined in their cells, and whom she nursed. This pious queen died in 1366, aged sixty, at Brie-compte-Robert, leaving one girl, Blanche, who was married to Philip Duke of Orleans ; she had also two others—Jane and Mary, who died young.

Jane requested by will that there should be no funeral honours bestowed on her ; nevertheless, after her death, she was transported to Notre Dame de Paris on a bed of state, with her face uncovered. The sheriffs of the town carried a cloth of gold, sustained on the point of lances, over her head ; the whole parliament, in their robes of ceremony, followed on foot ; and the reigning king, Charles V., accompanied the funeral procession as far as Saint Denis, where Jane d'Evreux was placed in the royal tomb by the side of her husband, Charles IV.

BRANCH OF VALOIS.

QUEEN JANE OF BURGUNDY.

(Reign of Philip VI.)

JANE was the daughter of Robert II., Duke of Burgundy, and of Agnes, daughter of Saint Louis, and sister to Margaret, who was strangled for adultery by order of her husband, Louis X. The hand of this princess was first promised to the prince of Tarentum, son of Charles II., King of Sicily, but, that union having been set aside, her marriage with Philip Count of Valois was negotiated in 1302, ratified in 1306, broken off in 1312, and at length realized at Sens in 1313.

The coronation of Philip and Jane was solemnized with a magnificence hitherto unknown. They entered Rheims with a numerous escort of princes, princesses, ambassadors, and ladies in costly attire. The palace of the archbishop, William de Trie, was not large enough to contain this brilliant assemblage, and new halls were obliged to be added to make sufficient space for their entertainment. The queen, to celebrate this epoch, presented the church with an ornament of silver cloth.

Philip displayed the esteem he entertained for his wife, in having named her regent when he meditated a long foreign war, but, as he never executed his projects, the regency was but a title of honour for her. Jane usually resided at the Hôtel de Nesle, which was situated on the banks of the Seine, on the spot where the Institution now stands, and where she died of the plague in 1348, aged fifty-five years. She was sincerely loved and deeply regretted by her husband, who had a high opinion of her wisdom and talents, and who associated her in his administration, and joined her signature to his own in all his most important acts: in the archives of his day are frequently to be found the words—"de l'avis et volonté de la reine, notre chère épouse."

Amongst other acts of her authority, Jane gave liberty to several prelates who were imprisoned for an abuse of privilege, and prevented the sentence of condemnation for rebellion being pronounced against Robert d'Artois. She had five sons,—John King of France, Philip Duke of Orleans, and three others who died young; besides a daughter, Mary Duchess of Limbourg.

This queen was interred in the royal cemetery of Saint Denis.

QUEEN BLANCHE OF NAVARRE.

JOHN, eldest son of Philip de Valois, succeeded to the throne, and was married to Bonne of Luxemburg, who, though mother of a king and daughter of a king, was never queen herself, having died before the accession of her husband. This princess was the daughter of John of Luxemburg, King of Bohemia. The greatest pomp and splendour presided at this marriage, which took place in 1332, and was attended by the Kings of Bohemia and Navarre, as well as by the sovereign Dukes of Brittany, Burgundy, Lorraine, and Brabant.

The amiable disposition of the Princess Bonne corresponded with her name, which made her universally beloved, and, after enjoying seventeen years of happiness with her husband, she died in the abbey of Maubuisson, in the year 1349, deeply regretted by all who were acquainted with her virtues; she was interred in the choir of that abbey. Bonne de Luxemburg left eight children, who were, Charles V., King of France; Louis, from whom some of the Kings of Sicily sprung; John Duke of Berri, father of Pope Felix V.; Philip-le-Hardi, Duke of Burgundy; Jane, who married Charles-

le-Mauvais, King of Navarre; Mary Duchess of Bar; Margaret, who was dedicated to the church at Poissy; and Isabella, who espoused Galeas Visconti, Duke of Milan.

After her death, Philip was desirous of marrying his widowed son John to Blanche, daughter of Philip III., King of Navarre, and of Jane of France; whose hand was disputed by several princes, and promised to Alphonzo XI., King of Castille; but as soon as the King of France made known his wishes to the King of Navarre, that engagement was dissolved, and the princess was sent to France. During Blanche's journey, the Queen of France died, and on her arrival she found the court in mourning; it did not however last long, for the king became so much enamoured of this young princess, whom he had intended for his son John Duke of Normandy, that he offered her his own hand, and Blanche's ambition induced her to accept the crown, by uniting herself at the age of eighteen to a man who was forty years her senior.

The marriage was celebrated at Brie-comte-Robert, in the year 1349; but Blanche did not long enjoy the dignity of reigning queen, Philip having died eighteen months after their marriage, at No-

gent-le-Rotron, in 1350, leaving his young and beautiful widow on the eve of her accouchement.

Blanche retired to the Château of Neaufles, where she gave birth to a daughter called Jane. She seldom appeared at court, and passed most of her days in retirement, where she was allowed abundant means of gratifying her taste for religious foundations and the bestowal of alms by the king, John, who had great esteem for her.

Some historians relate that she married her chamberlain, the sire of Rabaudanges, but that the king would not permit the union to be made public, and also insisted that that officer should continue to hold the same appointment in the queen's household. Whether this circumstance deserves credit is doubtful, but it is certain that, when the King of Castille, to whom she was affianced before her marriage with Philip VI., repeated his offer, she sent back the ambassadors with the following reply : —“ *Les reines de France ne se remarient pas.*”

Jane died at the Château de Neaufles, in the year 1398, aged seventy, and was buried at Saint Denis. This queen had but one daughter, Jane, who died at the age of eighteen at Beziers, when

on her journey to Spain to marry the Duke de Girone, son of Henry IV., King of Arragon.

QUEEN JANE OF AUVERGNE.

(Reign of John.)

JANE, daughter of William XII., Count of Boulogne, and of Margaret d'Evreux, was married in 1338 to Philip de Rouvres, Duke of Burgundy, by whom she had one son ; eight years after she was left a widow, the duke having been killed by a fall from his horse at the siege of Aquillon ; and when dying he recommended his wife and children to the care of the king of France.

Edward III., King of England, was desirous of forming an alliance with Jane d'Auvergne, on account of the proximity of the province of Boulogne to Calais, but John was so much captivated by the gentle manners and agreeable conversation of the Duchess of Burgundy, that he baffled Edward's projects, and the beautiful relict of the Duke of Burgundy espoused the widowed King of France.

The marriage was celebrated in 1349 by the Bishop of Paris, in the church of Nanterre, and the coronation took place at Rheims some months after.

The entry of the royal pair into Paris was most brilliant, and the commencement of their reign a series of magnificent entertainments; but after some few years of pleasure had rolled rapidly away, France experienced disasters which clouded it with grief.

In 1356 the king was taken prisoner at the battle of Poitiers, and conveyed to England, where he found consolation and sympathy in the heart of the Countess of Salisbury, who was deeply affected by his misfortunes.

At length peace was concluded with England, and John left several hostages as guarantees of his fidelity until the accomplishment of his engagement with Edward; but his son, the Duke of Anjou, who was one of the hostages, having violated his promise, and escaped to France, John immediately returned to England in 1364, and gave himself up as a prisoner, replying to those who endeavoured to dissuade him, that—"Si la bonne foi était bannie de la terre, elle devait trouver un asile dans le cœur des rois."

It has been said that John's real cause for returning to England was a desire to revisit the Countess of Salisbury, to whom he was much attached; but as nothing can be affirmed on this

subject, it is more in accordance with the excellent character usually attributed to that king to judge his motive on that occasion by his action, as well as by his noble reply, which does honour to his memory.

When in England, the king was seized with a severe malady, and the queen, who was deprived of all authority by the regency of the dauphin, resided at the court of her son, the Duke of Burgundy, where the grief she felt for her husband's misfortunes considerably abridged her days.

Jane died in 1365, exactly one year after her husband, and was buried at Saint Denis. She had no children by King John.

QUEEN JANE OF BOURBON.

(Reign of Charles V.)

JANE was the daughter of Peter I., Duke of Bourbon, and of Isabella of Valois, and was born at Vincennes in 1337, and married to the dauphin Charles in 1350. At the age of six years, Jane's father formed a project for contracting an alliance for her with the Count of Savoy, but the death of that prince's father prevented the engagement. In

1348 she was affianced to Humbert Dauphin of Viennois, but that prince, having resolved to retire from the world and devote himself to religion, gave his estates to Charles Dauphin of France, Duke of Normandy, who also inherited his betrothed wife. Fourteen years after their marriage, ^{Charles} Philip V. and Jane of Bourbon were crowned at Rheims by the archbishop, John de Craon, in 1364; and the queen, on her return from Rheims, made her entry to Paris, mounted on a horse richly caparisoned, and led by the king's brother on foot.

The king was devotedly attached to Jane, whose beauty made a great impression on the volatile Parisians. He spent large sums in procuring her costly dresses and valuable ornaments, and entitled her "le soleil du royaume." He placed her beside him in the parliament, and required her to give advice upon all occasions of difficulty.

Jane is represented as being worthy of these honours, by the careful education she bestowed on her children, and the virtuous example she set them. Christian de Pison says, "La royne, durant le repas, par ancienne et raisonnée coutume, pour obvier à vagues paroles et pensées, avait un prud'homme au bout de la table, qui

sans cesse disait gestes et mœurs d'aucuns bons trépassés."

This queen conducted the affairs of government with so much prudence during the king's long and frequent maladies, that he pronounced her regent, in conjunction with the Dukes of Burgundy and Bourbon, when his death should occur. In sickness and misfortune Jane was his consolation, as she had been the charm of his happier days ; and her death, which took place before his own, caused him a deep and settled regret from which he never recovered. Having imprudently bathed, in opposition to the wishes of her medical adviser, she expired at the royal residence of Saint Paul, in 1377, on giving birth to Catherine de France, Countess de Montpensier.

Her funeral obsequies were attended with great pomp, having been borne to the church of Notre Dame by the first nobles in the kingdom ; her body was clothed in royal robes, the face covered with a light veil of silver tissue, and bearing in her hand a rose and sceptre of fine gold. From Notre Dame she was conveyed to Saint Denis, where her remains still repose.

Jane was the mother of nine children, three of whom only survived her. The eldest was Charles,

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who succeeded his father as King of France; the next Louis Duke of Orleans; and the last and only daughter who was spared an early death was Catherine, whose existence cost her her life.

Queen Jane encouraged literature, which she cultivated herself with great success; her virtues rendered her loss a subject of sincere regret to the French, who were much attached to her.

QUEEN AND REGENT ISABELLA OF BAVARIA.

(Reign of Charles VI.)

THE kingdom of France, during the minority of Charles VI., was a prey to the depredations and rivalries of his uncles, the Dukes of Berri, Burgundy, and Anjou, who held the power without possessing the talents or the justice for governing. Charles V., with the politic view of fortifying France against the invasions of England, left his dying recommendation to his son to seek a wife among the princesses of Germany; but this wise project was attended with most unfortunate results: Isabella of Bavaria, daughter of Stephen II., Count Palatin du Rhin, and of Tadia Visconti, was chosen.

She possessed remarkable beauty, but was too young at that time for her marriage to be realised; it has been said that Heaven was desirous of giving France an opportunity to avoid that scourge. Nevertheless, the report of the projected marriage reached the court of Bavaria, which, sensible of the honours and advantages attending an alliance with the crown of France, forwarded the views of Charles VI. by a manœuvre, fearing lest that monarch should be united to the daughter of the Duke of Lancaster, or the heiress of Lorraine.

The Duchess of Brabant, an intriguing woman, treated with the young king's uncles respecting the marriage, and, as soon as she discovered there was a prospect of success, accompanied Isabella to France, who took the journey under the pretext of a pilgrimage. Charles VI. was at Amiens, whither the duchess conducted her charge, and introduced her to the king in all the brilliancy of her beauty, and in elegant attire; on her first interview she knelt before the monarch, who immediately took her hand and raised her. This artifice, palpable as it was, succeeded, and Charles VI., then only seventeen years of age, fell into the snare; one sight of Isabella determined his choice; he immediately sent his favourite, Bureau de la Rivière, to

ask the Duke of Bavaria for the hand of the princess, which was accorded, and the marriage celebrated at Amiens in 1385.

Her immoderate taste for luxury, and love of coquetry, began early to manifest itself, and she instituted a Court of Love, upon the model of that established by Eleanor of Guyenne. Besides the princes of the blood royal, and the most ancient nobility of France, there were also doctors of theology, bishops, chaplains, curates, and canons engaged in the affairs of this court.

The king, who was ardently attached to Isabella, encouraged her prodigality by his silence; she withdrew him from the cares of government, and made him the slave of her caprice.

Isabella was crowned at Paris in 1389, after the birth of two princes, upon which occasion magnificent entertainments were given. A triumphal arch was erected at the entrance of the town; all the streets through which she passed were hung with embroidery and flowers; at each crossing the Passion and Crucifixion were enacted, and the fountains threw forth milk and wine. As she passed over the Pont-au-Change, a rope-dancer, in the guise of an angel, descended from between the towers of Notre Dame, placed a crown of diamonds

upon her head, and re-ascended. She was seated in a car covered with linen cloth, which was then a new invention and of great value; hitherto the queens and princesses had travelled on horseback, or in litters, and Catherine de Medicis was the first queen in France who had a coach or chariot with leather curtains.

To these fêtes succeeded others at Saint Denis, and the magnificence and expense attending them was inconceivable; they lasted three days, and were concluded with a Bacchanalian orgie. The Queen of Sicily, then in Paris, was invited, and, under favour of their masks, the two queens and all the assembly committed the greatest disorders.

The king's weakness rendered him blind to the queen's irregularities, and his infamous wife commenced that course of vicious life which led her to deceive and betray her husband, her king, her son, and her country. No doubt her attachment to the Duke of Orleans was the first cause of the mental alienation of Charles VI., which signalised the commencement of that disastrous epoch, when, but for the miraculous aid of Providence, through the means of the celebrated Joan of Arc, France would have been subjugated, and the vanquished people have fallen under the English yoke.

The king's brother, Louis Duke of Orleans, was a person of vicious and dissolute habits, and this was the man for whom the queen forsook her husband, and neglected those talents which she might have rendered conducive to the happiness and welfare of the country. But she was ambitious and violent, and by her intrigues and extravagances forced the overtaxed people to revolt; she fomented divisions, which were extended by the power of the English in France, and was execrated by the people, who loved and pitied their sovereign, knowing that his misfortunes as well as their own were caused by the queen.

Charles, whose disposition was generous, and whose first wish was the happiness of his people, was too weak to withstand the perfidy of Isabella, who, instead of exerting her influence to settle the disputes which existed between the king and his uncles, fed the flame of discord.

The king's insanity augmented the disasters of the country; he was hunting in the forest of Mons in the year 1392, when the figure of a phantom appeared to him, and uttered some sinister predictions, which so terrified the monarch that he never entirely recovered his reason: this infamous trick is said to have been the work of John-sans-Peur, Duke of

Burgundy, and from that occurrence commenced the most fatal period of Charles's reign. Discipline was set aside for want of a master ; all were desirous of commanding ; and this terrible anarchy was increased by the quarrels between the Burgundians and Armagnacs, which deluged France with blood.

Nevertheless, at this unhappy period the queen maintained every species of revelry at court ; the misery of the people, and the confusion of the state, did not interrupt her pleasures : in this age were confounded massacres and fêtes ; the most terrible truths and romance ; transgressions and courtships ; all the disorders of the real as well as of the fictitious world.

Isabella took occasion of her husband's insanity to obtain supremacy, but, after having bestowed her confidence on the Duke of Orleans and his followers, she suddenly changed, declared herself in favour of the Duke of Burgundy, and opposed to the Duke of Orleans, because the latter appeared on amicable terms with his wife, Valentina de Milan, for whom she had a professed hatred. This Italian princess had contrived to calm the wandering mind of the unhappy Charles, and so insinuated herself in his favour, that he always saw her with pleasure, and at lucid intervals would converse

rationally with her, so that the Duchess of Orleans was accused of witchcraft. Her sorceries were, however, her numerous graces; she had brought polished manners, and a taste for refinement, into France, which, in its still uncultivated state, appeared to its inhabitants a species of magic; and, as Châteaubriand says, "On aurait brulée Valentine de Milan pour sa beauté, comme on brula Jeanne d'Arc pour sa gloire." Isabella has the credit of plotting this ridiculous accusation, which the superstitious people seized with avidity, so that Valentina de Milan was obliged to retire from her husband and the court.

In this sad position of affairs, the government of the health and person of the king was entirely intrusted to Isabella, and that of the affairs of state to her new partisan, the Duke of Burgundy. The Duke of Orleans, as brother to the king, disputed that right with him, and the queen again changed in favour of the Duke of Orleans, to whom the Duke of Burgundy was obliged to give place. During these family broils, the unhappy king was so neglected that he sometimes even wanted the necessaries of life. His children were not more fortunate than himself; their governess one day complained that they had neither proper food nor clothing, when Charles took a gold cup which stood

beside him, and gave it to the governess, desiring her to procure what was necessary for them.

At length, during a lucid interval, the king assembled a council, for the purpose of remedying the general misery, and the people, being exasperated against the queen, revolted, and obliged her and the Duke of Orleans to leave Paris and seek refuge at Melun; from thence she sent for the dauphin, but the Duke of Burgundy would not permit him to go to her. The queen and the Duke of Orleans raised troops, and prepared to oppose the Duke of Burgundy, and some time elapsed before peace was restored between them; however, a reconciliation at length took place, and the two dukes received the sacrament together, embraced each other, and swore by the Holy Evangelists to preserve amity. The day following the Duke of Orleans was assassinated on quitting the Hôtel Barbette, the residence of his sister-in-law, the queen, where he had passed the night, she being in momentary expectation of giving birth to a child, upon which occasion he manifested great anxiety and interest. A modern writer asserts that this child was the miraculous Joan of Arc.

The Duke of Burgundy did not attempt to conceal that he was the author of this crime, and

triumphed over Isabella, whom he had robbed of her lover and protector, and obliged once more to take refuge in Melun ; she, however, shortly afterwards possessed herself of Paris, which she re-entered in triumph, and assembled a council, in which Juvenal des Ursins, the king's advocate, declared that Charles VI. had made choice of the queen his wife as regent of France during his indisposition ; a declaration which Isabella had no doubt forced or purchased. Her next act was to authorise the Duchess of Milan to demand justice for the murder of her husband, which she did ; but it was no easy task to bring the Duke of Burgundy to justice.

This prince had many partisans in Paris, and was both popular and powerful ; he advanced with his army for the purpose of retaking the town, and for the third time Isabella quitted the capital ; but on this occasion she was accompanied by the king, the dauphin Louis, the dauphine, the Kings of Sicily and Navarre, and a great many nobles, and transferred the court to Tours ; so that on his arrival at Paris the duke was coldly received, and obliged to enter into a negotiation with the royal family, who returned to Paris.

The treacherous and crafty queen, in 1411, by an

unaccountable spirit of caprice and inconstancy, threw herself into the murderous arms of the Duke of Burgundy, who had been her most bitter enemy, and on whose head she had set a price. At this juncture England, profiting by the civil feuds, declared war against France, and Henry V. of England gained a signal victory at Agincourt in 1415, by which, with the internal divisions, the kingdom was left almost entirely to the power of the English. At this period Isabella lost three of her sons. Charles, who became dauphin by his brother's death, was opposed by the Duke of Burgundy, and this unnatural mother joined with that prince against her son.

Charles united with the Count of Armagnac, and, in order to procure means for carrying on the war with England, seized all the treasures and precious stones which his mother had placed for security in different churches; he also arrested the chevalier de Saligny, a gentleman who professed great attachment for the queen, although she was twenty years older than himself.

This act, which occurred in 1417, overwhelmed Isabella with despair, and she determined to revenge it. While waiting a favourable opportunity to give vent to her resentment, she retired to the

château of Vincennes, where she surrounded herself with a most dissolute court : the companion of her guilt there was Louis de Boisbourdon, a gentleman who had gained great distinction by his courageous conduct at the battle of Agincourt. The king, in one of his sensible intervals, when on his way to Vincennes, met Boisbourdon, whom he caused to be arrested on the spot by Tanneguy Duchâtél ; he then ordered him to be strangled, his body enclosed in a sack, on which was written, “ *Laissez passer la justice du roi,*” and thrown into the river.

The dauphin was so outraged at the infamous conduct of the queen, who publicly acknowledged herself the mistress of the Duke of Burgundy, that he arrested and sent her to Tours, under the charge of Laurent Dupuys and others.

Although forty-six years of age, Isabella was still beautiful, and the Duke of Burgundy was so much captivated with her that he put himself at the head of eight hundred men, attacked the Abbey de Mar-montiers, in which she was confined, delivered her, and conducted her to Joigny.

Isabella's aversion for her son was augmented by her arrest ; it is said that she more than once attempted to poison him, and that it was the belief in his death that induced the king to appoint her

regent. In virtue of that power, she issued orders throughout all the towns in France, enjoining obedience to the Duke of Burgundy ; she appointed new ministers of the crown, who expedited the affairs of state under the duke's private seal.

The discontented princes, amongst whom was the Duke of Orleans, son of the duke who was assassinated, besieged Paris ; the palace of the king and dauphin was forced, and the Duke of Burgundy obliged to retire. The pope, Martin V., sent legates to endeavour to conciliate the parties, but in vain. The Duke of Burgundy once more obtained the advantage of his enemies, and retook Paris. He made a triumphal entry into the capital with the queen, escorted by twelve hundred men. Isabella was seated on a brilliant car, magnificently dressed, and proceeded to the residence of the king, the Hôtel Saint Paul, in the midst of acclamations and banners, and through streets strewn with flowers, and still stained with the blood which she had shed, —a sad proof of the levity of the people !

Her first act after the retaking of Paris was to suppress the Parliament, and have the throats of all the members cut ; after which she created a new council to enregister her laws. Paris became a scene of carnage ; the prisons were forced and the

prisoners massacred; more than three thousand persons were sacrificed to the fury of the Duke of Burgundy and his royal mistress; the English possessed themselves of Rouen; and this queen, of odious memory, negotiated the loss of the kingdom with the enemies of France.

She appointed an interview at Meulan with Henry V., King of England, whither she intended to conduct her daughter Catherine, who was then eighteen years of age, in the hope that she might captivate the heart of the English monarch; but the Duke of Burgundy, who foresaw that his country would infallibly fall into the hands of the English, baffled this intrigue of the queen by preventing the interview.

In 1419 a treaty of peace was concluded between the dauphin and the Duke of Burgundy, but the enmity was too deeply rooted to suffer it to last, and Jean-sans-Peur was assassinated on the bridge of Montereau by some of the dauphin's partisans. The vindictive queen resolved to punish her son for the murder of the object of her affections; he was the third lover who had met with a violent death; and in 1420 she concluded the ignominious treaty of Troyes, by which Henry V. of England espoused her daughter Catherine, and was to suc-

ceed to the throne of France : a double violation—of the Salique Law, as well as of the law of primogeniture, Catherine having had two sisters older than herself; nevertheless, Isabella influenced Charles VI. to acknowledge the King of England for his heir, to the prejudice of the dauphin.

This treacherous action of the queen did not succeed, for Henry V. died at Vincennes in 1422, exactly six weeks before the unfortunate Charles VI.

During his frenzied attacks Charles was sometimes so violent that no person dared to approach him; Isabella of Bavaria entirely abandoned him in his malady, leaving him unprovided with proper food and necessities, so that he was seized with a leprous disease after remaining five months without changing his linen.

At length his criminal wife sent a young girl named Odette de Champdivers, the daughter of a horse-dealer, to attend upon the king. This young person was remarkable for her beauty and gentle disposition, and acquitted herself of the commission confided to her with the greatest devotion and patience: she alone understood him, and was in effect the only person whose presence he could endure; and Odette spent hours in playing cards, which were recently introduced in France, to while

away the heavy time of the maniac and captive monarch.

It is said that Charles VI. feared Odette as much as he loved her, and that she was sometimes obliged to exercise her authority to make him partake of his meals, and even change his dress; so that she was styled "*la petite reine*."

Her self-sacrifice was complete, and, although the result of her intimacy with the king was the birth of a daughter, she has been thought worthy of commendation for having consecrated her liberty and existence to the alleviation of misery and the consolation of her unhappy sovereign.

Odette de Champdivers' daughter, Margaret of Valois, was acknowledged as sister by Charles VII., who presented her with a handsome dower on her marriage, which took place in the year 1427, with Robert de Harpedanne, lord of Belleville, in Poitou.

After the death of Charles VI., Isabella was engaged in constant quarrels with her son. The French people detested her; she dragged on a miserable and neglected existence; and she, who united the pomp and depravity of Messalina to the sanguinary taste of Catherine de Medicis, died poor and abandoned at the Hôtel Saint Paul, fifteen days after the treaty of Arras, in the year 1435.

After the ceremony of the coronation of her grandson, Henry VI., King of England and France, which occurred in 1432, he saluted her in passing the windows of the Hôtel Saint Paul, at one of which she was standing ; on returning his salute, she retired in tears. "C'était," she said, "du plaisir de voir son petit-fils orné de deux couronnes." It would be doing her a greater honour to suppose that her tears were the effect of repentance.

Isabella had six sons, all of whom died before her but Charles VII., for whom she expressed the deepest hatred ; she had also six daughters, among whom were—Isabella, who married Richard II., King of England, and, after his death, Charles Duke of Orleans ; Michal, wife of Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy ; Catherine, who married Henry V., King of England, and afterwards Owen Tudor, grandfather of Henry VII. ; Mary, who was dedicated to the Church at Poissy ; and Jane Duchess of Brittany.

Isabella's corpse was conducted at night by the English in a little boat to Saint Denis, where it was buried beside her ill-used husband, Charles VI. : her heart was deposited at the church of the Celestins of Paris.

QUEEN MARY OF ANJOU.

(Reign of Charles VII.)

MARY, daughter of Louis II., Duke of Anjou and King of Naples and Jerusalem, and of Yolande of Arragon, was nine years of age when she was affianced to Charles of France, Count of Ponthieu, in 1413. The prince was then only eleven years old, and the marriage was realised nine years after at Tours.

This princess was remarkable for her mildness, piety, and resignation under Charles's numerous reverses ; she cheerfully shared her indolent husband's fate during fourteen years that his kingdom was almost entirely under the dominion of the English. She even supported with patience his love of pleasure, and the disdain of some of his many favourites, who were not all so respectful to her as to Agnes Sorel.

At the age of twelve years Charles is said to have formed an attachment to one of his mother's maids of honour ; she was the daughter of Charles VI.'s chamberlain, William de Kassignel, lord of Romainville. To celebrate Gerarde's beauty he had the letter K, a swan (cygne), and the letter L, embroidered on his banners, and these hieroglyphical figures were in usage for a long series of

years. She married Bertrand de Rochefort, and, after his death, Antoine de Rohan, lord of Rochelle.

Charles greatly esteemed his amiable wife, who contributed, as far as lay in her power, towards arresting the disorders of affairs during the invasion of the English : she sacrificed her jewels and all her valuables for the subsistence of the army, and prevented, in conjunction with Agnes Sorel, the discouraged king from retiring to Dauphiné, and by that means delivering up all the meridional provinces to the enemy.

At that time the appearance of Joan of Arc entirely changed the fortune and credit of the French army. Two women, who were contemporary with the infamous Isabella, are entitled to the gratitude of their country, and the names of Agnes Sorel and Joan of Arc are associated in its welfare : the one conceived noble projects ; the other executed them with intrepidity.

John of Arc was brought up at Doremy, a village near Vaucouleurs in Champagne, upon the frontiers of Lorraine, and was occupied until the age of seventeen in tending her father's sheep and aiding him in the care of his garden. At the end of February, in the year 1429, she presented herself before the Sire Baudricourt, governor of the town,

and requested him to send her to the dauphin, whom she declared Heaven had commissioned her to re-establish upon his throne. The governor, thinking her mad, dismissed her; but she returned in a few days, and entreated him, for the love of Heaven, to send her, assuring him that on *that day* the dauphin would suffer great loss; and that, if she did not go and raise the siege of Orleans, he would endure still greater. The loss Joan referred to was the unfortunate combat of Rouvrai, which was upwards of three hundred miles distant from Vaucouleurs, and which when Baudricourt heard of, he remembered the singularity of her announcement, and provided her with the means of proceeding to the dauphin.

The persons appointed to accompany her hesitated, fearing to encounter English troops in traversing the country; but Joan displayed such firmness, and so energetically guaranteed their safety, that their confidence was restored, and they arrived safely at Chinon, where the king then was. The same fear of ridicule which deterred the governor from paying attention to Joan's first application retarded her interview with Charles, but she was at length admitted.

It is said that, when introduced to the monarch,

whose dress was in no way different from that of those who surrounded him, she instantly distinguished him, and related her visions and revelations with so much enthusiasm, and made such sensible and even sublime remarks, that the king was embarrassed how to act.

As proof of her power, she was required to perform a miracle, when she replied that she had no power to that effect, but that, if they would conduct her to Orleans, she would give them certain signs of her mission. Charles asked her whether she did not think that Heaven would save France without the aid of arms; she modestly replied, "*Les gens d'armes combattront en mon Dieu, et le Seigneur donnera la victoire.*" All who visited her were astonished at her wisdom and edified by her piety.

The king provided her with a complete suit of armour, excepting the sword, which she requested might be fetched from the tomb of an old warrior in the church of Saint Catherine de Fierbois, and which was found in the spot she described. Charles also supplied her with the entire equipage and retinue of a commander, and sent her to the aid of Orleans. Armed with her sword and sainted banner, she led on the troops to the attack of the fortifications which the English had raised, inspired

them with an extraordinary enthusiasm, and struck terror into the hearts of the British soldiers when she planted her standard on the breach. At the commencement of the action she received a wound in the neck from an arrow, which she plucked out with her own hand; she reanimated the confidence of the soldiers, when she perceived it failing; and at length entered triumphantly into the town of Orleans, amidst the acclamations of the inhabitants whom she had come to deliver. (1429.)

She next advised the king to take possession of all the small towns that surrounded Orleans, in order to proceed to Rheims without opposition, a journey which she strenuously urged the necessity of his undertaking: many of the first generals opposed her wishes, but Joan knelt before Charles, and, embracing his knees, said, "*Gentil dauphin, ne tenez plus tant de conseils inutiles; mais ne songez qu'à vous rendre à Rheims, pour y recevoir la couronne.*"

The Dukes of Alençon, Dunois, La Hire, and other warriors, watched her movements with the greatest admiration.

At the siege of Gergeau she was observed to mount on the highest step of the scaling-ladder and wave her banner; at the same moment a stone struck

her so violently on the head, that it broke her helmet and cast her to the foot of the walls; but she immediately rose and cried out, "Amis, amis, sus, sus! notre Seigneur a condamné les Anglais. Ils sont à nous. Bon courage!" She took the brave Talbot prisoner at Xaintrailles, as also Patay and Scales, and conducted the king in safety to Rheims, where he was crowned with the usual ceremonies, during which Joan of Arc stood near him, dressed in armour, with her banner extended over his head. At the conclusion of the consecration she prostrated herself before the monarch, and, with a voice half suffocated with emotion, said, "Enfin, gentil roi, or est exécuté le plaisir de Dieu, qui voulait que vous vinssiez à Rheims recevoir votre digne sacre, en montrant que vous êtes vrai roi, et celui auquel le royaume doit appartenir."

She then declared that her celestial mission was accomplished, and entreated to be allowed to retire to her native village and resume her former avocations; but the king was unwilling to lose the services of the heroine, and required her to make an attack on Paris, where she was dangerously wounded, and again renewed her prayers for a dismissal. "Henceforth," she said, "she would have no dying regrets." The Count Dunois inquired whether she

had had any revelation respecting her end; she replied she had not, but that God had given her no other command than to raise the siege of Orleans and conduct the king to Rheims. She was, however, so earnestly exhorted to continue in the king's service, that she suffered herself to be persuaded, but not without compunction, as she said an interior voice warned her to retreat.

The king exempted the village of Doremy from all future taxes, ennobled her family and all their posterity, granted them armorial bearings, and bestowed on them the name of "*Des Lis*;" but the heroine herself was always called "*La Pucelle*." The historian Daniel remarks that in his time the descendants of her family were still living.

Joan, devoted to new perils, enjoyed none of these honours; she threw herself into Compiègne, which was then besieged by the English and Burgundians, and was taken by a captain of the latter, who delivered her up to Count John de Ligny Luxembourg, and he sold her to the English for the sum of three thousand francs in ready money, and an annuity of three hundred francs for the captor,—infinitely more than Edward III. paid to the soldier who took King John of France prisoner. The English celebrated the imprisonment of Joan of

Arc with the greatest demonstrations of delight; but Charles made not the slightest attempt to recover her from their hands: he enjoyed the fruits of her work, without bestowing one thought on her who had opened his road to victory.

Although Joan was a prisoner of war, she was not treated as such, but handed over to ecclesiastical justice, and John Couchon, Bishop of Beauvais, and a host of prelates and lawyers, were the judges of a girl of nineteen years, who had neither advocates nor defenders. The process lasted three months, and had sixteen sittings; the original manuscript still exists, and Joan's firm and prudent replies afford subject for continual astonishment. In reply to the first interrogation, which required her to answer truly to every question that should be put to her, she said, "You may probably ask me to say that which I cannot reveal without perjuring myself."

"Promise," said one of her interlocutors, "not to reply evasively."

She answered, "If I save myself, you cannot accuse me of having violated my word, because I have not given you my faith." Among other questions she was asked whether the king had visions. Her reply was, "Send and ask him." She remarked

to the Bishop of Beauvais, "In becoming my judge, reflect upon the burthen you are imposing on yourself." Everything was done to embarrass her, and for the purpose of confusing her several frequently interrogated her at one time: "Good fathers," she said, in a calm tone, "one after the other, if you please."

Some of her enemies proposed to put her to the torture, but the Duke of Bedford refused, lest she should expire under the trial; but this action was the refinement of barbarity: "The King of England," he said, "has bought her at a high price, and wishes to have her publicly burned." Joan endeavoured to escape from her prison, but in jumping from a window was injured and retaken; after which a chain was fastened round her body, and the soldiers who guarded her were never suffered to leave the room, even when she changed her dress, which was, as she confessed, the most painful part of her captivity. She was condemned to be burned alive as a sorceress.

Her place of execution was the Vieux Marché of Rouen: opposite the pile two scaffolds were erected for the secular and ecclesiastical judges. Joan was dressed in female attire, with a mitre on her head, on which were written the words,

"Apostate, Relapse, Idolâtre, Hérétique :" she was supported by two Dominican friars, and manacled. Meekly kneeling, she pronounced a short prayer recommending herself to God, and generously asking glory, honour, and welfare for her king, who had so ungratefully forgotten her. Her piety and resignation affected her judges, and even the Bishop of Beauvais, to tears.

Some historians assert that she mounted the wood-pile with firmness, harangued the people, and heaped reproaches on the English; others, that she ascended with humility as an innocent victim, without bravado or complaint.

She asked for a crucifix, and an English soldier broke a stick and formed a cross, which he presented to her; Joan kissed it with devotion, and pressed it to her bosom. Her agony was long, in consequence of the extreme height of the pile, which was done to afford a spectacle to the people; her torture drew forth some moans, and her last faltering words bespoke confidence in her Saviour, whose aid she implored. Thus died this glorious young girl, who was courageous in combat, prudent in counsel, and of irreproachable manners in the midst of the camp. It is asserted by many histo-

rians that after her death, on removal of the ashes, her heart was found entire.

She has been the theme of many poets of different countries ; the most distinguished of whom are Schiller, Voltaire, and Southey. Châteaubriand says that in her character is to be found " the simplicity of the peasant, the weakness of the woman, the inspiration of the saint, and the courage of the heroine."

It is not less astonishing than true, that not one effort was made by Charles VII., either by way of ransom or reprisal, in favour of Joan. According to some historians, the cavaliers at court were jealous of the glory of the female warrior ; and the king's favourite, Agnes Sorel, feared that her youth and devotion would form too deep an impression on the sensible heart of the monarch. Twenty-five years after her death, the king, who doubtless felt remorse for this shameful neglect, caused the process of her trial to be looked over, when the judgment was publicly pronounced *null, abusive*, and *unjust*, and two solemn processions were made in Rouen as a form of apology ; nevertheless the judges were not punished, but all those who assisted in her condemnation died miserably, and two suffered the same execution.

Some writers assert that there existed a mutual affection between Joan of Arc and Charles VII., and that after his coronation she lived with him as his mistress; but there is not the slightest proof that any such intimacy existed, and his neglect of her, even before her capture, is sufficient evidence to the contrary: moreover, he was at that time devoted to Agnes Sorel.

This lady was born in 1409, in the village of Fromanteau in Touraine, one of the most beautiful provinces in France, and was daughter to St. Geran, of the family of the Count of Clermont, and of Catherine de Maignelais. Her father most carefully directed her education, and Isabella of Lorraine, Queen of Sicily and Duchess of Anjou, was so much interested in her, that she appointed her maid of honour.

This queen arrived at the court of France in 1431, in the hope of obtaining the liberty of her husband, who was then a prisoner of war: Agnes, who accompanied her, was at that time in all the radiance of her beauty; her intellectual conversation was as captivating as the elegance of her form and the sweetness of her smile; she was called "*la belle des belles*."

Isabella of Lorraine engaged Agnes to use her

influence with the king towards procuring her husband's release, and the monarch was so pleased with her, as also was the queen, Mary of Anjou, that the latter, unsuspecting of the future, entreated the Queen of Sicily to suffer her to enter her service.

The king loaded Agnes's family with gifts and honours, and his passion for her betrayed itself in the costly presents of dress and equipages which he made her—"Comme de porter grands et excessifs atours de robes fourrées, de colliers d'or, et de pierres précieuses, et tous ses autres désirs." She was the first lady not of royal blood who wore diamonds in France; hitherto the use of them had been confined to the queens and princesses only.

For five years the queen retained Agnes in her service, daily honouring her with her affection and favour; she appeared to be the only person at court who was ignorant of the king's attachment. Charles VII. passed his days at the châteaux of Loches and Chinons, in the midst of pleasures and fêtes of which she was the ornament. But Agnes, who heard constant reports of the alarming progress made by the English, felt that the blame of the king's indolent repose would be attributable to

herself, and determined to rouse him from his lethargy.

She used every persuasion which patriotic zeal could devise to inspire him to action and urge him to glory, and succeeded in reanimating the courage and energy of the monarch; who, but for her generous efforts, would have abandoned the siege of Orleans, notwithstanding he was excited to undertake it by the valiant maid of Vaucouleurs.

At that time it was customary to have astrologers as well as fools in the royal palaces, and great faith was placed in the predictions of those soothsayers. The king one day consulted a celebrated magician respecting the future fate of his mistress, when he replied that she was destined for many years to be the object of passion to a great monarch. Agnes immediately assumed a grave air, and said,—“ Then I must go to the court of England to accomplish my destiny, Sire, for you will soon lose your crown, and Henry will unite it to his own.”

Many of the courtiers were jealous of the influence she possessed over the mind of the monarch, and the most envious of the ladies pitied the queen; but the people of France, by universal acclamation, acknowledged that Agnes Sorel was the instigator

of their king's reaction, and the credit and glory of all Charles VII.'s most vigorous resolutions are attributed to this favourite.

The following lines are said to have been written by Francis I., on seeing her portrait :—

“ Gentille Agnès, plus d'honneur tu mérites,
La cause étant de France recouvrir,
Que ce que peut dèdans un cloître ouvrir,
Clause nonnain, ou bien dévot ermite.”

The dauphin, Louis XI., who was of a most fierce and ungovernable disposition, and could not even support paternal discipline, much less that of the king's mistress, and who was moreover jealous of the influence she possessed over his father, launched forth the most bitter sarcasms against her, and one day, in a warm discussion at the château de Chinon, in the year 1445, struck her; Agnes demanded justice for the insult, and Louis was exiled to Dauphiné.

Charles built a beautiful château for Agnes Sorel at Loches, where she frequently resided, it being her favourite place of retirement; she had also another château near Vincennes, called “Beauté,” from which she acquired the title of “La Dame de Beauté;” she was also the Lady of Issondun, and of La Roche-Servière, and Countess of Penthievre, in

consequence of some possessions which she had in Brittany. All these and many others were the gifts of the king.

She was residing at Loches in the year 1449, when Charles, who was still engaged in the war with England, arrived at Jumièges, a celebrated Norman abbey; and Agnes, having heard that a conspiracy had been formed against the king, in which the dauphin was concerned, immediately proceeded thither to warn him to take precaution; or, as some writers assert, for the purpose of rekindling the flame which had begun to languish in the monarch's heart: but the injunctions she gave the king respecting his safety she neglected herself, and the dauphin, in revenge for the punishment she had been the cause of subjecting him to, contrived to have poison administered to her, which caused the premature birth of a daughter, of which she died at Jumièges, in 1449, aged forty years.

Agnes was very much regretted by the clergy and the poor, to both of whom she gave abundantly; when she felt her end approaching, she assembled around her all the young ladies of her household, whom she most feelingly exhorted to retain the path of morality and virtue, and impressed upon their minds the frail and unstable

nature of mere personal advantages—a truth of which many women, like herself, are not convinced until a late hour.

She had three daughters, who were legitimized and acknowledged by Charles VII., who richly endowed them: their names were Charlotte, married to Jacques de Bréze, Count de Maulevrier, who in a fit of jealousy killed her with his own hand; Jane, who espoused Antoine de Beuil, Count de Sancerre, and to whom Louis XI. gave forty thousand gold crowns for her dower; and Margaret, wife of Oliver de Coetivi. Agnes Sorel named Jacques Cœur, superintendent of finances, and Stephen Chevalier, treasurer, her executors. She was interred in the collegiate church of Loches; her tomb was placed in the centre of the choir, which was filled with bronze and marble tablets covered with inscriptions in her praise. The canons of Loches basely proposed to Louis XI. to destroy these records; but that king, whose vengeance was satisfied, told them that they should first render back all the benefits and donations they had received from that lady; and the tomb existed until the year 1792.

Before the death of Agnes Sorel, Charles VII. took a lively interest in her cousin, Antoinette de

Maignelais, who was born at his court in 1434. In 1448 he gave her the lands of Maignelais for a possession, and at the age of sixteen married her to the Baron de Villequier, lord chamberlain and dignitary of the crown; nevertheless the king's attachment for her was not less known than that of her predecessor, whose influence she inherited.

At her marriage, Charles gave her the islands of Oléron and Marennnes, and in 1458 presented her daughter, Jane de Maignelais, with eight thousand two hundred and fifty francs, on the occasion of her union with the Sire of Rochefort. Antoinette had also another daughter; but neither of them was acknowledged by Charles VII., her marriage having averted the scandal attending their birth.

She was a widow at the period of Charles VII.'s death, which occurred in 1461; and, dreading the pitiless rigour of Louis XI., she retired to the court of the Duke of Brittany. This prince greatly resembled Charles VII. in person, and, like him, found much to admire in Antoinette, who passed the remainder of her days with him, and died peaceably at his court, after presenting him with two sons and two daughters.

The queen, Mary of Anjou, is accused by some authors of weakness, in not resenting these infi-

delities of her husband ; but Arquetil relates that, when some of the courtiers remarked the irregular conduct of Charles VII., she replied, " He is my lord, and has all power over my actions, but I have none over his."

Her fierce and rebellious son Louis held her in great esteem, although he disobeyed her ; and the queen's foresight and intervention on more than one occasion prevented him from revolting against the king, who nevertheless starved himself to death, under the impression that his unnatural son would poison him.

From the period of her widowhood, which commenced in 1461, Mary of Anjou devoted herself entirely to the practices of religion, and died, aged fifty-five, in the year 1463, at the Abbey des Châtelliers, in Poitou, on her return from a pilgrimage which she had made to Saint Jacques in Gallicia. Her body was transported to Saint Denis.

Mary was the mother of twelve children :—the dauphin, who succeeded his father as Louis XI. ; Charles Duke of Normandy, who was poisoned ; and two other princes who died young : and eight princesses, among whom were Radegonde, wife of Sigismond, duke of Austria ; Catherine Countess of Charolais ; Yolande, wife of Amédée IX.

Duke of Savoy ; Jane Duchess of Bourbon ; and Madelaine, who married Gaston de Foix, Prince of Viane.

After the death of Charles, Mary resided at Bourges : she founded twelve chapels, in which she established twelve priests, who every hour in the day recited prayers for the unfaithful husband who had rendered her life a series of sacrifices, and herself a model of resignation.

QUEEN CHARLOTTE OF SAVOY.

(Reign of Louis XI.)

MARGARET, daughter of the first James Stuart, King of Scotland, at the age of three years was affianced by treaty, in 1428, to the Dauphin Louis, who was then only eighteen. The marriage was celebrated at Tours, by the bishop of that town, eight years after the promulgation of the treaty.

This alliance was the result of political considerations, and Margaret had many difficulties to surmount in her voyage to France. The English, who foresaw that the marriage would cement a union between their common enemies the Scotch and French, endeavoured to prevent her embarkation :

having failed in the attempt, they offered the King of Scotland Rosburg, Berwick, and several other places, which James rejected, and they then sent out a fleet to stop the progress and take possession of the princess on her way; but some Flemish vessels, which they mistook for Margaret's escort, diverted their attention, and she landed safely at La Rochelle.

The dauphine, whose amiable disposition entitled her to the affection of her husband, was soon treated by him with indifference, for, though he respected her merits, Louis was incapable of a real attachment, being selfish and narrow-minded.

She is represented as having been clever and intellectual, and possessed great taste for the fine arts, which she loved and cultivated. It is said that, passing through one of the rooms of the palace, and seeing Alain Chartier, the Coryphæus of the learned of that period, sleeping on a bench, she approached and imprinted a kiss upon his mouth: her attendants expressed their surprise, when she replied "that it was not the man she kissed, but the mouth which pronounced such sublime oracles."

Margaret had exceedingly plain features, but her sister Isabella was very beautiful. The Duke of Brittany, who proposed to marry her to his son,

sent ambassadors to Scotland to see and take back a description of her. They informed him that she was handsome, upright, and graceful, but that she appeared very simple. "My friends," said the duke, "return at once to Scotland, and bring her here; she is all that I desire, and I will have no other: your clever women do more harm than good. By Saint Nicholas! I consider a woman sufficiently clever if she knows the difference between her own robe and her husband's pourpoint."

The amiable but unfortunate Margaret was the victim of some court intrigue. She one day overheard herself ungenerously calumniated by a gentleman of the court, named James du Tilley, which so sensibly affected her that she was seriously indisposed in consequence, and became so weary and disgusted with her existence, that, on being offered some remedy, she repulsed it, saying, "*Fi de la vie ! qu'on ne m'en parle plus.*"

Margaret died at Châlons-sur-Marne, in 1445, aged twenty years, without having children, or ascending the throne for which she had been destined. She was buried in the church of Châlons, and thirty-six years after her death her ashes were transferred to the abbey of Thouars, in Poitou, but her tomb was destroyed by the Protestants.

The dauphin, who during Charles VII.'s reign lived in disgrace at Dauphiné, and whose confined resources did not permit him to sustain the dignity of his rank as hereditary prince, thought it advisable to seek the hand of Charlotte of Savoy, who had been promised by her father a dower of six hundred thousand gold crowns.

She was the daughter of Louis II., Duke of Savoy, and of Anne of Cyprus, and was cheerfully accorded to Louis, to the prejudice of the Duke of Saxony, to whom she had been previously affianced. They were married at Chambéry, in 1451; but Charlotte was not a more happy wife than her predecessor, though she possessed greater personal advantages. She was intelligent, modest, and exemplary, but she had not sufficient energy to moderate and soften the harsh and selfish Louis, who was considered a cold-hearted tyrant by all women of sensibility, but who, though he professed a thorough contempt for the female sex, nevertheless excepted his wife, Charlotte of Savoy, whom he several times conducted to Orleans, Tours, and Paris. On one of her visits to the latter town, it is said that the queen received a most brilliant welcome; an elegant boat awaited her, on board of which a magnificent collation was provided, and among other refresh-

ments was a stag composed of sweetmeats, round the neck of which the queen's arms were suspended.

She landed at the Celestins, where the then customary performance of the Holy Passion was enacted; after which she proceeded on horseback to the palace of Tournelles, where another grand entertainment was provided for her.

Louis even at times suffered her to offer advice in the council, and by her intervention a reconciliation was effected between the king and the Duke of Normandy. He also enjoined his son to honour the queen, though he afterwards encouraged him to disobey her.

Notwithstanding Louis XI. acknowledged his wife's merits, he often treated her with great indifference, and committed many gross infidelities, sometimes even lavishing his attentions on women of mean birth. The obscure attachments of this disgusting and crafty monarch would be as well omitted, did not the names of some of his favourites figure in history. The first was Phelise Renard, by whom he had a daughter called Guyette, who married Charles de Sillons. She was succeeded by Margaret de Sossenages, daughter of the governor of Dauphiné, Henry II., Baron of Sossenages, and Antoinette de Saluces. At the age of eighteen she

was married to Amblard de Beaumont, who died shortly after their marriage. On his accession to the throne in the year 1446, Louis conducted her to court, where she died in childbed with her third daughter, ten years after. Margaret's three children were pronounced legitimate: they were, Mary, wife of Aynard de Poitiers, and grandmother of the celebrated Diana of Poitiers; Isabella, Countess of Saint Priest; and Jane, who married the Bastard of Bourbon.

When at the court of Burgundy, Louis attached himself to Huguette de Jacquelin, whom he deserted for Madame Gigou, the widow of a merchant of Lyon, who had been killed by one of Louis's soldiers. During the expedition of Picardy, the widow appeared before the king to claim justice for the murder of her husband, and Louis, unmindful of the calls of generosity, granted her request upon the condition that she would follow him; he, however, deviated from his natural avarice and made her some presents. On one occasion he ordered a jeweller, named Passefilon, to make her a valuable ornament, which was taken to the king by his wife. The tyrant compelled her to become his mistress, and, to gratify the complaisant and dishonoured husband, appointed him to a parliamentary office, of which he despoiled some other person.

Shortly after he lost his son, the Duke de Berri, whom he had by Huguette de Jacquelin; and his grief was so violent on the occasion, that he made a vow to the leaden image of the Virgin which was always suspended from his hat to attach himself henceforward exclusively to his wife and queen. Louis married the widow Gigou to Jean-le-Bon, who afterwards had his eyes put out for endeavouring to poison him, to serve the Duke of Burgundy.

Queen Charlotte offended her husband by her natural affection for her country, Savoy, as also for her attachment to Burgundy, whose sovereign was Louis's great enemy. She endured his harsh reproaches with meekness, and unhesitatingly submitted to many privations to gratify his avaricious disposition. At length this cruel king confined her in the château of Amboise, in a most miserable state of penury, and allowed her merely what was absolutely necessary for food and clothing; equally ungrateful and forgetful that it was her dower that had enabled him to enjoy prosperity during his season of poverty and disgrace. A contemporary historian says, "*Charlotte eut beaucoup à souffrir des bizarreries de son époux; il la tint bien petitement accompagnée et mal accoutrée: aussi, pour la grande crainte qu'elle avait de lui, et pour autres*

rudesses qu'il lui faisait souvent, il est bien à croire qu'elle n'avait pas grandes voluptés en sa compagnie."

After a wearisome union of twenty years, the king died, but Charlotte did not long enjoy her liberty, having followed him to the tomb at Amboise three months after, in the year 1483.

This queen had six children :—Charles VIII., who succeeded his father ; Francis, Joachim, and Louisa, who died young ; Anne de Beaujeu, who was regent during her brother's minority ; and Jane, wife of Louis XII. Charlotte was buried at Notre-Dame-de-Clery, by the side of her husband.

ANNE OF FRANCE, REGENT.

(Reign of Charles VIII.)

PERHAPS the only claim to sincerity that Louis XI. possessed was in his attachment to his daughter, Anne de Beaujeu, who was not less celebrated for beauty than for her profound genius, sagacity, courage, and political talents : the sceptre was never wielded with greater vigour than during her regency.

In 1461 her father negotiated a marriage for her with the Marquis of Pont-à-Mousson; but this young nobleman died suddenly, and Anne became the wife of Peter II., Duke of Bourbon and Sire of Beaujeu: the king gave her a hundred thousand gold crowns on her marriage.

Peter de Beaujeu was mild and easily governed; he had, moreover, so little confidence in his own talents, that he submitted in all things to his more spirited wife; this disposition was most agreeable to Anne, who bore a great moral resemblance to her father, being artificial, ambitious, and vindictive, but judicious withal, and capable of inspiring a lively interest in those whom she was desirous of making her partisans.

The Sire of Beaujeu's submission and Anne's artifice so entirely captivated the suspicious mind of Louis XI., that they alone were admitted into the château of Plessis-les-Tours, the gates of which were closed against all Frenchmen. From the heights of his donjons the dying despot, 1483, declared his daughter Anne regent, and guardian to her young brother, Charles VIII.; to the prejudice of his wife, Charlotte of Savoy, and the princes of the blood-royal, amongst whom the Duke of Orleans was much disappointed at the decision.

Madame de Beaujeu required all the assistance of her great talents to enable her to preserve this authority, which was, for the first time, confided to a daughter of France. She had two rivals to contend with—Louis Duke of Orleans, who was heir to the throne in the event of Charles VIII.'s death, and her brother-in-law the Duke of Bourbon. If these two princes had united their interests, Anne would infallibly have lost her power, for the court and people were equally weary of the insupportable yoke of her father, Louis XI., and dreaded her government, in consequence of the great resemblance her character bore to his. Nevertheless, by her skilful management she contrived to maintain her authority.

She first created a division between John of Bourbon and the Duke of Orleans, and these two noblemen, after becoming enemies, preferred to yield to the princess rather than to each other. She then proposed to submit the decision of the regency to the States-General, and to retain the government confided to her by her father, provisionally, until the settlement of the question.

During the period occupied in electing the members throughout the provinces for the union of the States, Madame de Beaujeu diligently endeavoured

to gain the esteem of the nobles and people by a moderate government. She suppressed many heavy taxes, and released and recalled many persons unjustly imprisoned and exiled by her capricious and despotic father. At the same time she satisfied them, by giving up to public judgment three ministers, vile agents and intimates of the late king, who had abused his confidence, and incited him to the committal of many crimes, the catalogue of which was already endless. Olivier le Daine was hanged; Dayac was publicly flogged, after which his ears were cut off and his tongue pierced through; and John Cottier, another vampire of the court, and doctor of Louis XI., who had amassed immense wealth by imposing on the monarch's credulity and fear of death, was condemned to pay an enormous fine, which left him but a modest subsistence for the rest of his days: so by her wise and judicious management she gained great popularity.

The young king appeared at the assembly of the States, at Tours, in 1484, and declared his intention to follow the counsels of his sister; and, the States having approved his decision, Madame de Beaujeu continued to hold the reins of government, in which she exerted all her talents, and acted with great policy. She is, however, reproached with having

offered Provence to the Duke of Lorraine, for the purpose of attaching that skilful general ; but the young king publicly proclaimed that he never would consent to such mutilation of the kingdom : she also committed an error in having restored Rousillon and Cardagne to Ferdinand-le-Catholique, King of Spain, although he had not yet paid the sum of money they had been substituted for.

In order to indemnify the Duke of Bourbon for his disappointment in regard of the regency, she presented him with the sword of the Constable of France. She also recalled two meritorious persons who had been unjustly exiled by her father, Honoré d'Urfé and Poncet de la Rivière, and reformed numerous abuses.

Madame de Beaujeu was most scrupulous in the exaction of respect to herself and her authority. Being one day present when the king and the Duke of Orleans were playing a game of tennis with some other noblemen, she gave her judgment against the chance of the duke ; and this prince, naturally passionate, and who considered his sister-in-law his enemy, addressed some insulting remark to her. This affront, which took place in the presence of the king, was unpardonable in the estimation of a woman who discovered an enemy in the man for

whom she had conceived a secret attachment. She would not venture to arrest the first prince of the blood royal immediately, but she assembled the council, and the Duke of Orleans, suspecting danger, retired to the protection of the Duke of Alençon.

Madame de Beaujeu, who foresaw that a civil war would not only cause much bloodshed, but also compromise her authority, sent confidential messengers offering him a sincere reconciliation if he would ask her pardon; but the Duke of Orleans, who placed little confidence in the promises of an artful and vindictive woman, sent back her agents and strengthened his position. He was joined by the Count Dunois, the Duke of Bourbon, and other nobles. Madame de Beaujeu's danger was imminent; she assembled troops, and formed two armies: one, commanded by Marshal de Gié, she sent to Guyenne, in 1485; the other, under the orders of Monsieur de Graville, she herself accompanied with the young king to Bourbonnais, against the Duke of Orleans, where her vanity and ambition triumphed in the absolute submission of the heir to the throne of France.

In 1468 the Bretons revolted against their sovereign duke, or rather against his unworthy minister Landois; and the Duke of Orleans, pro-

fitting by this circumstance, clandestinely quitted the court and retired to Brittany. Madame de Beaujeu on this occasion displayed energy and prudence; she represented to the Duke of Brittany that in giving an asylum to a rebel prince he was exposing himself to the resentment of France. The Duke of Orleans added to the regent's discontent by offering to divorce his wife, her sister Jane of France, in order to marry the heiress of Brittany, to whom he was much attached. The regent sent troops, who took possession of several towns in Brittany, and her spirit and courage were crowned with success in the battle of Saint Aubyn, in which the Duke of Orleans, after performing prodigies of valour, was taken prisoner by Louis de la Tremouille, and confined, by order of Anne, in the great tower of Bourges, where he remained upwards of three years. His wife, Jane of France, repeatedly solicited his deliverance from Anne de Beaujeu and from the young king; the former was inexorable, and the latter so accustomed to respect his eldest sister's will, that he declined for some time to interfere, especially as by rendering the duke his liberty, as the first exercise of his power, he would be mortifying Madame de Beaujeu. He was, however, persuaded by the tears of his youngest

sister, the Duchess of Orleans ; and, in order to escape the vigilance of the regent, made a pretext of going to Bourges with a hunting-party, where he waited in a neighbouring château, while he sent two attendants with directions to have the doors of the tower opened for the Duke of Orleans. The prince on arriving embraced the knees of Charles, who affectionately pressed him in his arms, and, not content with spending the day with him, insisted on having a bed placed for him in his own room ; and from that moment a sincere and lasting friendship existed between them.

On hearing of this circumstance, Madame de Beaujeu felt that her authority had expired ; and immediately wrote a letter to her brother, assuring him that she regretted *not* the loss of her power, but of his good graces. The king re-assured her in that respect, and proved his esteem for her by consulting her on all important affairs. As the last stroke of policy and power, Madame de Beaujeu succeeded in marrying the king to Anne, heiress of Brittany, by which the re-union of Brittany and France was effected. Charles VIII. had been for some time affianced to Margaret, daughter of Maximilian I., Archduke of Austria, and of Mary of Burgundy ; and although this princess had the

title of dauphine, the regent sent her back to her father, and the monarch espoused Anne of Brittany in 1491.

After this epoch Madame de Beaujeu gave no further advice to the king, excepting on the occasion of his expedition to Italy, of which she did not approve, and in the concerns of his private life. When he went to Naples the title and duties of the regency devolved upon the queen, and Anne resolved to retire to Bourbonnais, where, surrounded by a numerous suite of ladies and cavaliers, she lived on her own domains in the greatest magnificence.

On the accession of the Duke of Orleans, under the title of Louis XII., he never troubled her retreat, but generously forgot all her severity: some person having recalled to his memory the wrongs he had received under the regency, he replied, "Ce n'est pas au Roi de France à venger les injures faites au Duc d'Orléans."

Madame de Beaujeu became a widow in 1503, and died at the château of Chantelle, in Bourbonnais, in 1522, aged sixty years. She was buried by the side of her husband at the priory of Savigny. Her only daughter, Susan, was married to the Constable of Bourbon, who was afterwards celebrated

for his defection under Francis I.; he was at the head of a sect called "*Frondeurs*."

Madame de Beaujeu's private character is without blemish; her predominant passion having been ambition: she was often heard to remark that no woman, either in youth or at an advanced age, had experienced greater temptations than herself.

QUEEN AND REGENT ANNE OF BRITTANY.

ANNE of Dreux was the daughter of the last sovereign Duke of Brittany, Francis II., by whose death she became sole heiress of that duchy. This princess was born at Nantes in 1476, and, though remarkably tall, was graceful and beautiful; she had, however, one leg shorter than the other, but this defect was hardly perceptible. Her mother, Margaret de Foix, having no other child, paid undivided attention to her education, which she confided to Madame de Laval.

There were several competitors for her hand, among whom was Alain d'Albret, father of John King of Navarre and seven other children; but she declined his assiduities, being only thirteen

years of age, whereas he was upwards of forty ; moreover, she dreaded his numerous family, most of whom were older than herself. The Duke of Orleans was also her suitor ; but the Prince of Wales, eldest son of Edward IV., King of England, would have been preferred, had not his premature and violent death snatched him from his brilliant position. Anne also refused the Count de Rohan, who, notwithstanding his pretensions to Brittany, adopted this bold device : “ *Duc ne daigne, roi ne puis, Rohan suis.* ”

•The heiress of Brittany had some difficulty in discarding Maximilian of Austria, King of the Romans, who, in 1490, had been solemnly affianced to her in the cathedral of Nantes, but whom she declared she never would marry, because he had a son older than herself by his first marriage with the Duchess of Burgundy, who was kept in a state of perfect indigence by the avarice of his father, the emperor. Anne was really attached to the Duke of Orleans, who had taken refuge at her father's court when he revolted against the regent ; but he was already married to Charles VIII.'s sister, Jane of France, and moreover was taken prisoner at the battle of Saint Aubyn, and kept a close captive in the great tower of Bourges.

The regent, Madame de Beaujeu, was desirous that Charles VIII. should marry this princess, who opposed the union for some time, but at length consented to it, and Margaret of Austria, who had been affianced to Charles by the treaty of Arras, and enjoyed the title of dauphine, was sent back to Austria, as before stated; and thus the house of Austria received a double affront through France. In 1491 she was married to Charles VIII., at Langeais, in Touraine, and accompanied her husband to Plessis-les-Tours, where the court was then held. She afterwards proceeded to Paris, where she was received with great splendour. The coronation took place at Saint Denis, in 1492, and during the ceremony the Duke of Orleans supported the crown upon the brow of the queen whom he so tenderly loved.

The joy on the occasion was universal: Anne was entitled the queen-duchess, and returned from Saint Denis to Paris amidst universal acclamations. It was a popular fête on the occasion of the aggrandisement of the kingdom, and she at once obtained from the king the confirmation of the Bretons' privileges. Although acquainted with her husband's infidelities, Anne was a tender and affectionate wife; she both loved and honoured

Charles, who has been justly styled the most honest of men and best of princes.

Amongst the favourites to which the king attached himself were Anna Solieri, whom he met during his campaign in Italy in 1495, and the Marchioness Teresina Pallavicini, with whom Charles lived at the little town of Chieri, during the siege of Navarre, and by whom he had one daughter, named Camilla, who lived and died in this retreat.

But the queen's chagrin at these faults in her husband was not to be compared to that which she experienced at the death of the dauphin, Charles, her last surviving child, who expired shortly after the king's return from Italy; and the monarch, though deeply afflicted at this loss, repressed his own grief in order to solace hers. All the nobles of the court endeavoured to assuage her sorrow, by diverting her with tournaments and entertainments. The Duke of Orleans gave a superb fête at Amboise, to which all the court were invited, and displayed so much magnificence and immoderate gaiety, that the jealous courtiers did not fail to observe to the queen that the dauphin's death rendered the Duke of Orleans a second time heir to the throne; upon which, the queen, forgetting her former sentiments for the duke, conceived so forcible

a resentment against him, that she obtained his dismissal from court, which he never revisited until he was king of France.

After his return from Italy, Charles was a model of conjugal fidelity; he was tenderly attached to Anne, who lived happily with him until his death, which occurred in 1498. The widow of this good and valiant prince, having lost her four children before her husband, was obliged to descend from the throne, for which, however, she was again destined. Until this period the mourning habit of queens had been white, but Anne of Brittany adopted the deepest black; she ordered a magnificent funeral for her husband, and erected a superb mausoleum to his memory.

During Charles's expedition to Italy she performed the function of regent with talent and judgment, although at that time only eighteen years of age; and when at his death the administration of the government of Brittany devolved upon her, she willingly applied herself to it, and promulgated many useful laws.

Anne of Brittany well knew the power she possessed over the heart of the Duke of Orleans, then king under the title of Louis XII.; having remarked to her ladies of honour that "she did not

despair of her happiness, having it in her power to become reigning Queen of France again, if she wished it ;” and which in effect she did ; but the regularity of historical relation requires the remainder of her life to be deferred, Louis XII.’s first wife, Jane of France, claiming prior attention.

QUEEN JANE OF FRANCE.

(Reign of Louis XII.)

THE marriage of the Duke of Orleans with Jane of France was a union which was forced by her despotic father, Louis XI., whose orders none dared to disobey. Jane was amiable, but exceedingly sensitive, and, being deformed, she feared to inspire the young prince with disgust. She was only twelve years of age when the marriage was celebrated, in 1476, and the Duke of Orleans, who was then but fourteen, secretly protested against an alliance which he could not refuse, and was obliged to simulate an attachment which he did not feel, in order to avoid the resentment of the king. At length Louis XI.’s death put an end to this odious slavery, but the prince did not openly separate from Jane, out of respect for her brother King Charles VIII.

Nevertheless, this princess was worthy of a better fate, and omitted none of the duties of a fond wife : she was sincerely attached to her husband ; and when he was vanquished at the battle of Saint Aubyn in 1488, and during his captivity at Bourges, forgetting her own wrongs, she manifested the greatest tenderness for him, and never ceased her intercessions for his delivery until she obtained it.

The Duke of Orleans was not insensible to these proofs of goodness and affection, but he was disappointed at Jane's sterility ; and as he was devotedly attached to Anne of Brittany, he conceived the project of obtaining a divorce after the death of Charles, and marrying his widow, who, though she deplored her husband, admired and esteemed the Duke of Orleans, who had now a double attraction for her in being master of the crown of France.

The amiable Jane did not ask that sacrifice at the hands of her husband which gratitude alone should have commanded ; and the new king assembled the council, and explained his motives for dissolving the marriage, which had been forced by fear with a princess whose relationship to him was within the degree prohibited by the Church, and by whom he despaired of having an heir to the throne.

Pope Alexander VI. nominated three bishops to examine the justice of Louis's demand, and the queen, when interrogated on these subjects, answered with firmness and modesty, and generously sacrificed herself to promote the happiness of the king and husband she loved.

Garnier, who wrote the continuation of Vely's History, energetically paints the agony of both during these proceedings. "Imagine," he says, "a princess educated under the shadow of the throne, and accustomed from her infancy to receive marks of submission and respect, traduced before the pontiff's commissioners, and in the position of a suppliant obliged to listen to injurious and disagreeable suppositions, and to receive formal declarations of disgust and aversion from the lips of a husband to whom she was fondly attached; hardly venturing to give vent to a complaint or suffer her tears to fall, lest she should give pain to him in whose hands her fate was. But in this abyss of misery and grief, perhaps she was less to be pitied than the author of her woes; for she had at least the consolation of her innocence, and of that constancy which is inspired by a conscience pure and without reproach; whereas Louis, who was naturally just, what reproaches must not his conscience have heaped

upon him ! What torments must he not have suffered when, in consequence of an odious proceeding, he found himself obliged to hear facts, which should have been buried in the shade of silence, publicly disputed, and, in fine, was reduced in some measure to profane the majesty of the throne and the sanctity of matrimony, as well as to persecute and confuse an innocent princess, his wife and relation, who, far from deserving his hatred, had been his best friend and succour in adversity !”

The same historian who traced this touching picture expressed his belief that, if Louis XII. had foreseen the extremities to which he would be obliged to proceed, he would never have suffered the trial to take place.

The judges, who were freed from all scruple by the acquiescence of the queen, pronounced the nullity of the marriage, and Alexander VI., requiring the aid of Louis XII. in Italy, expedited the bull of divorce, which was conveyed to the king by César Borgia, a natural son of the pontiff : Louis presented him with the duchy of Valence, and the title of Duke of Valentinois, for this service.

The king, who was sensible of the generous sacrifice Jane had made, gave her the duchy of Berri, and several other extensive domains, as well

as an annuity of twelve thousand crowns, which was a very considerable sum at that time. She retired to Bourges, where in 1501 she founded the convent of the Annonciades, which was a very austere order of devotees, whose rules she followed, although she did not adopt the dress. This pious princess lived six years after her misfortune,—if the renunciation of worldly grandeur for a life of tranquillity can be so called,—and died in 1505, in the odour of sanctity, at the age of forty-one. The tomb of this canonized queen was destroyed by the Huguenots in 1562; it had the reputation of performing miracles while it existed.

QUEEN ANNE OF BRITTANY.

FAITHFUL to his sentiments of love for Anne of Brittany, which eleven years had not obliterated, Louis XII., after his divorce in 1499, married the beautiful widow, then twenty-four years of age, who re-ascended the throne of France amidst the acclamations of the people. Some voices were raised against the irregular conduct of Louis in divorcing a virtuous wife; but he was king, and universally beloved, so that these clamours were easily stopped.

The marriage contract with Louis XII., which stipulated that if Anne died without children the duchy of Brittany should return to her own relations, and that she should reserve the sovereignty of it during her life, was very unlike that with Charles VIII. Garnier remarks that, in the first, it was a sovereign espousing his vassal, who was obliged to abide by his imperious laws; in the second, a queen, who joyfully yielded her hand to her lover.

The ceremony took place at Nantes, and was attended with many splendid entertainments. Anne is represented as having had a most dazzling complexion of snow-white and carnation; she was tall and graceful, and, though rather lame, contrived to give an air of majesty to her gait. Naturally eloquent, she conversed with dignity; her character was lofty and commanding; but she was sometimes unjust, vindictive, and self-willed.

Her court was more brilliant than the court of France had ever hitherto been, and from this epoch a remarkable revolution took place in the general manners. She set an example of industry to the ladies who surrounded her, always occupying some part of the day in embroidery and elegant fancy-work, and she vigilantly observed the conduct of the

princesses, so that propriety and decorum were never more respected than during her rule.

These interior occupations did not prevent Anne from attending to the duties of the kingdom. She invariably received all foreign princes and ambassadors in the plenary court, with a splendour and dignity that was renowned throughout Europe.

The excellent Louis XII., so justly styled "the father of his people," feared to augment their expenses by any acts of extravagance, having on his accession reduced the taxes to one-half what they formerly were; and the liberalities and favours of the crown were consequently dispensed by the queen, who bestowed them with discernment, and drew the greater portion from the revenues of Brittany. After the unprofitable expedition to Milan, from which the officers returned despoiled of all they possessed, she proceeded to the army at Lyon, where she warmly welcomed the brave and unfortunate warriors, upon whom she bestowed money and new equipages, and then entreated them in gracious terms to continue their faithful and precious services to the king. She also gave out of her own private revenue twelve vessels of war, which she equipped for the expedition against the Turks in 1501.

Louis XII., during his expedition to Italy, having penetrated into Genoa in 1502, the inhabitants entertained him with great magnificence. During these fêtes, in which he was surrounded by numerous Italian ladies in all their beauty and brilliant attire, he distinguished the Marchioness Spinola, who was remarkable for her grace and elegance.

Without considering the power, and, above all, the vindictive disposition of her royal rival, the beautiful marchioness forsook all the world for the king, who resided with her until his return to France : when quitting Genoa he made her promise not to follow him, as he dreaded the consequences of the queen's jealousy and suspicion. Louis was, however, always the subject of her thoughts, for when a false report of his death reached Italy, in consequence of a dangerous illness with which he was attacked at Blois in 1503, the too sensitive Genoese could not support the unexpected stroke, and she obstinately refused to partake of any nourishment ; but her death was accelerated by grief before it could take place by starvation. The king, on receiving the news of this self-sacrifice, was sensibly touched by so much ill-placed devotion, and made the poet d'Anthon celebrate the constancy of the unfortunate Tomasina, whose tomb he ornamented

with various inscriptions, "en signe de continuelle souvenir et de spectacle mémorable." This liaison was carefully concealed from the queen, who would otherwise have infallibly manifested her displeasure.

During Louis's severe illness at Blois, Anne attended him day and night with unceasing assiduity; her grief was profound, as well as that of all France, for in fact the life of the king was not more precious to the queen than to the people. Nevertheless, seeing that his recovery was very improbable, her anxiety for him did not prevent her thinking of herself; and she had the policy to conceive the design of going with her daughter Claude into Brittany; previous to which undertaking she loaded several vessels on the Loire with all her valuables. The Marshal Gié arrested this convoy, and even detained the queen-duchess herself.

Anne never forgave this affront, but persecuted the Marshal all her life; but the king and all France applauded his patriotic and courageous conduct, which prevented the queen from realising her project of marrying the Princess Claude to Charles of Austria, by which Brittany would have been united to Spain, whereas it was Louis's wish that it should continue to be allied to France by the

union of that princess with the Count of Angoulême, afterwards Francis I.

As soon as Louis XII. recovered, Anne, who ought to have considered the conduct of Marshal Gié as meritorious, and esteemed him for his zeal, was base enough to revenge herself, and never ceased her importunities till the king exiled this faithful servant. But that did not satisfy the queen-duchess, who created most iniquitous accusations against him, traduced him before both houses of parliament, and obtained a sentence of death against him. This judgment was, however, loudly protested against, and the parliament of Toulouse were content with despoiling the good citizen of his government for five years.

Another serious fault is attributed to Anne of Brittany. After the victories gained by the French at Giaradda and Ravenna, the ambitious pope, Jules II., was reduced to extremities. Louis XII. could have dictated the most glorious conditions for France at the gates of Rome, but the queen suffered her superstitious scruples to be overruled by the artful pontiff, who prevailed on her to exert her too great influence over the king, by which the conqueror submitted to the yoke of the vanquished, and a most disadvantageous treaty was

concluded in 1513, in favour of Jules II., who placed France under an interdict, and excepted Brittany.

On the occasion of the Council of Pisa, the king, who was vexed at her interference, said, "Do you consider yourself wiser than all the heads of the most celebrated universities, who have approved it? And has your confessor never told you that women have no voice in the affairs of the Church?"

Louis often found in this beloved and cherished wife a secret and domestic enemy, but he had fortunately sufficient vigour to paralyse her efforts when opposed to the glory and welfare of France. She even had her own particular body-guard, composed entirely of Bretons, and the king suffered this, and many other acts of self-will, in consideration of her good qualities. She protected and patronised the learned of her time, and the father of Clement Marot was created queen's poet,—a creation she no doubt thought advisable in order to hand her virtues and graces down to posterity.

The historian Garnier remarks "that she was a tender, complaisant, and submissive wife to Charles VIII., who appeared to have taken little pains towards attaching her, and who was far less faithful than Louis XII., to whom she was cross, capri-

cious, and haughty, and whose heart she nevertheless entirely possessed."

Anne erected many religious edifices; one particularly worthy of notice was a convent of Cordeliers, so called "en l'honneur des liens dont le Sauveur du monde fut garrotté la nuit de sa Passion:" she also manifested great esteem and veneration for the pious Francis de Paule, whom she chose for her son the dauphin's godfather.

A premature accouchement caused this queen's death, which occurred at the royal residence of Blois, in the year 1514, when she was thirty-eight years of age. The king and Bretons, who deeply regretted her, bestowed a magnificent funeral on her remains, which were exposed for three days on a bed of state, after which they were transported to St. Denis, and interred beside her first husband, Charles VIII. By her will her heart was sent to the Carthusian monastery at Nantes, where it was received in a golden urn, and placed in the chapel that was dedicated to the ashes of the Dukes of Brittany.

Anne of Brittany had four children by Charles VIII., all of whom died before her; and four by Louis XII., but two only survived her:—they were Claude, wife of Francis I., King of France; and

Renée, who married Hercules II. d'Este, Duke of Ferrara. The prayer-book of this queen is preserved in the royal library at Paris; the numerous vignettes it contains are exceedingly curious.

QUEEN MARY OF ENGLAND.

ALTHOUGH Louis XII. was deeply afflicted at the loss of his wife, his grief was still more profound at the confused condition of the affairs of the kingdom; and, although fifty-three years of age, he determined to secure peace by a marriage with Mary, sister to Henry VIII., King of England, and daughter of Henry VII. and Elizabeth.

The Duke of Longueville, who was a prisoner in England, negotiated this marriage between Louis XII. and Mary, who at the age of sixteen was considered the most accomplished and intellectual princess of the time. She was first affianced to the celebrated Charles Quint, but, less sensible to the charms of ambition than to those of love, she had already given her heart to a young English nobleman, named Charles Brandon, who was first page to Henry VIII., and afterwards dignified by his royal master with the title of Duke of Suffolk.

Notwithstanding the King of England was aware of the reciprocal attachment of these young people, he accorded the hand of his sister to the King of France; but the splendour of the crown had no charms for Mary, who shed abundance of tears at the decision. After having encountered a frightful storm in the Channel she landed at Boulogne, where she was received by the young Count d'Angoulême, afterwards Francis I., King of France, the Dukes of Alençon and Bourbon, and the Counts Vendôme, St. Paul, and Guise. Mary's reception was most brilliant, and the amiable and handsome young Count d'Angoulême was captivated with the lively and beautiful English princess.

The marriage was celebrated with many splendid fêtes and tournaments, in the year 1514, at Abbeville, where the king arrived escorted by fifteen hundred gentlemen; and the queen confessed herself dazzled and delighted with the magnificence and chivalry that surrounded her; but her smile was always directed towards the young Duke of Suffolk, who accompanied her to France in the quality of ambassador.

Although related to Louis XII., the Count of Angoulême paid great court to the wife of his father-in-law, in consequence of which his mother, the

Countess of Angoulême, closely watched the actions of the queen, and was not slow in discovering the attachment between her and the Duke of Suffolk. This caused her great anxiety, from fear that Mary's love for the duke and indifference for her husband should be the cause of an intimacy which might produce an heir to the kingdom, and for ever eclipse the hopes of Francis Count of Angoulême, and heir-presumptive to the throne of France. The Count therefore promised the Duke of Suffolk that, if he would engage faithfully to maintain his respect for the queen, and preserve her honour, he would assist him in a secret marriage with her after Louis XII.'s death, and provide them with a suitable establishment in France, if England disapproved of the union: he moreover assured him that his movements were watched, and that any particular attentions to the queen would infallibly ruin him. The Duke of Suffolk faithfully kept his promise, and acted with the greatest discretion: nevertheless the young queen was never alone; the Baroness d'Aumont slept in her apartment at night, and the Countess d'Angoulême watched her through the day.

The king, though weak and declining, gave many splendid fêtes for the entertainment of his young

wife, and to gratify her changed his manner of living. A contemporary author says, "He was always accustomed to dine at eight o'clock, whereas now he dines at twelve; and instead of retiring to rest at six o'clock in the evening, he frequently remains up until midnight."

Louis XII. died two months after his marriage, and Mary, not being pregnant, was, in 1515, obliged to cede the throne to the princess who had so carefully watched her conduct. Three months after, Francis I., true to his promise, had the marriage celebrated between Mary and the Duke of Suffolk, which her brother Henry VIII. approved, notwithstanding their violation of the usual forms; and, shortly after, the union was again solemnized in England.

The duchess died at the age of thirty-seven, in the year 1534, having left one daughter, who was mother to the unfortunate Jane Grey.

LOUISA OF SAVOY, REGENT.

(Reign of Francis I.)

THIS princess was the daughter of Philip II., Duke of Savoy, and of Margaret of Bourbon, and was born at Pont d'Ain in 1476. Louisa was only twelve

years of age when she married Charles d'Orléans, Count of Angoulême, to whom she brought a dower of thirty-five thousand livres.

She was obliged to conform to the will of Louis XI., and the taste of her husband, who loved retirement, and with whom she lived in the château de Cognac, where she nourished the germs of ambition in the hope that she would one day have an opportunity of developing them. She had at that time no society but the few noble families who resided in the environs; and her only pleasure consisted in equestrian exercises and the chase: her elegant horsemanship was the admiration of all the surrounding country.

At the age of twenty Louisa of Savoy was a widow, and the mother of two children,—one was Francis I.; the other Margaret, afterwards Queen of Navarre,—whose education she carefully attended, notwithstanding her youth.

Charles VIII., whose court was at Amboise, invited her there, and the Countess d'Angoulême hastened to quit Cognac, and appear in all the brilliancy of her youth and splendour. After Charles VIII.'s death, Louis XII. also, who had lost both his sons, welcomed this princess as the mother of the heir-presumptive. All these honours irritated

Anne of Brittany, who treated the Countess of Angoulême as a subject, whereas she wished to live on those terms of familiarity which are natural between two mothers whose children are affianced. In consequence of this, Anne hated Louisa; for Anne, although queen, had no male posterity, and might soon lose her crown, whereas Louisa, who was only a countess, had a son who was heir-presumptive to the throne.

Although these two women could with difficulty maintain the exterior forms of politeness, yet Anne, when dying, named Louisa the guardian of her daughter, who espoused the Count of Angoulême three months after, in the year 1514.

Mary of England, who was far less ambitious than her predecessor, treated the Countess d'Angoulême with more politeness and attention, although she so vigilantly spied the actions of that queen. At length the death of Louis XII. raised Francis I. to the throne, and the Countess d'Angoulême's ambition and love of show was gratified by her being admitted into the councils, and dignified with the title of duchess, as well as enriched by the possession of vast domains: she shared the government with her son, whose confidence in her was unbounded.

On leaving France for the expedition to Italy in 1515, Francis placed the reigns of government in the hands of his mother, to the prejudice of the queen, whose youth was the pretext for this unjust preference; Claude might, however, if aided by upright councillors, have avoided the faults which her mother-in-law committed, notwithstanding her talents. The regent's avidity and extravagance caused the loss of Milan; for in the reign of Louis XII. this conquered country had been treated with humanity and moderation, and the garrisons were regularly paid; but afterwards the money was not forthcoming, and the Swiss, no longer receiving their due, abandoned the French, who were obliged to resign their conquest. Jacques de Baulne, Lord of Samblançay, the superintendent of finances, had promised the army four hundred thousand crowns, which the regent persuaded him to give up to her, to disburse the expenses of her mad prodigalities.

When Francis I. examined into the source of these disorders, Madame d'Angoulême first contrived to obtain the receipts she had given Samblançay from the commissioners, in whose hands they had been placed; and afterwards denied that she had ever received any sums of money from the superintendent of finance. This minister, who could

not sustain his protestations for want of proofs, was condemned to be hanged ; and the Duchess of Angoulême had the barbarity to suffer the innocent to perish for her fault. The old Lord of Sainblançay, who had served under three kings, walked with intrepidity to the gibbet of Montfaucon, on which he breathed his last.

The duchess's love of coquetry and her pretensions to beauty, although forty-four years of age, produced still more direful consequences. In 1521 she became captivated with the young Count de Montpensier Bourbon, Constable of France, and adopted a thousand manœuvres to attach him to her. The constable, instead of encouraging her advances, treated them with disdain, and the regent, as a last effort, offered him her hand. This was a brilliant proposal for the Count of Bourbon, as by accepting it he would have been father-in-law to the king, and also have acquired immense power; nevertheless he refused it with terms of insulting raillery; for he had always professed the greatest antipathy to Francis I., as well as to the Duchess of Angoulême, who was fifteen years older than himself: moreover, he was attached to Margaret de Valois, afterwards Queen of Navarre, who was styled at court the tenth Muse and fourth Grace,

on account of her elegant form and beautiful features.

Finding herself despised by the man she hoped to win, the outraged regent was determined to be revenged, and immediately commenced proceedings for despoiling the constable of the wealth and possessions of his late wife, Susan de Bourbon, daughter of Madame de Beaujeu. The chancellor Duprat undertook the cause, and the process lasted seven months, during which time the duchess, who neglected nothing that could injure her enemy, placed all his lands under sequestration. In 1523 he was deprived of the vanguard of the army and of the government of Milan; and in a fit of desperation abandoned his king, betrayed his country, and sullied his sword and name by the fatal resolution he made to place himself at the head of the enemy's army: when fighting against Francis I., at the battle of Pavia, he took his king prisoner.

Francis I., on writing this sad news to his mother, who was the author of these troubles, commenced his letter with these words: "Tout est perdu, hors l'honneur." She was accused by the whole nation of having been the cause of Bourbon's defection, of having abused the power confided in her, and ruined the fortune of France.

Louisa endeavoured by most diligent exertions to repair all these evils. During her son's captivity at Pizzighitone, she negotiated with England so skilfully and successfully, that she contrived to detach that country from the emperor, Charles Quint, and procure its alliance with France by a secret treaty. She gained over Pope Clement VII. and the Venetians to her interests; and after providing for the security of the frontiers of the kingdom, and stirring up the whole of Europe against Charles Quint, she wrote him to stipulate for the freedom of her son.

The greatest eulogy is due to the Duchess d'Angoulême for the energy and talent she displayed under the difficult circumstances with which she had to contend; but it would have been far more laudable for her to have reflected upon the danger she was incurring, and the evils she was likely to produce, by her persecution of the first captain in Europe, and by that means have avoided them.

At length Charles Quint offered Francis I. the choice of receiving as hostages all the bravest cavaliers of France, or the two young princes; and Madame d'Angoulême's decision does her great honour, in having turned a deaf ear to the sentiments of nature, and preferred preserving all the

most illustrious and skilful generals for the good of the country. In 1526 the treaty of Madrid, which rendered Francis I. his liberty, was concluded, and the regent herself conducted her two grandsons to Andaye, to answer as hostages for their father's fidelity to his engagements.

Although the regency terminated on the return of the king, Madame d'Angoulême preserved great influence in the administration, and unceasingly endeavoured to restore peace to the exhausted country. Francis I. gave her full power to treat with Margaret of Austria for a peace with the Low Countries; the conference took place at Cambrai in 1529, and the foundation of the agreement was the liberty of the young princes.

These two princesses made their entry into Cambrai the same day with great pomp, and signed the treaty known by the name of the "*traité des dames*;" which, although not very advantageous to France, does some credit to the regent, who had the gratification of receiving in person her two grandsons at Fontarabia, and seeing calm restored to France.

The Duchess of Angoulême was attacked with the plague shortly after, at Fontainebleau, where she went to inspect the works of a castle which the king

was building. She, however, temporarily recovered, and, wishing to fly from further infection, took the road to Blois, but was stopped at Grez, in Gatinais, by indisposition from its effects. The appearance of a comet filled her with terror, having always experienced a great dread of death, and being persuaded that this meteor announced the approach of her end, which occurred three days after, at the age of fifty-five, in the year 1531.

Her remains were interred with great magnificence and solemnity at Saint Denis.

In her coffers were found, after her death, the enormous sum of fifteen hundred thousand gold crowns, which would more than have sufficed for the ransom of the king. The journal of her life has been published; it does not however contain anything of interest, being merely notes of a domestic nature concerning herself and her children.

The contemporary writers, whom Louisa patronised, offer many apologies for her, notwithstanding her superstitions and faults; but although more modern and disinterested authors do justice to her talents, they cannot pardon her odious treachery to Samblançay, nor her treatment of the Count of Bourbon, by which she sacrificed the public interest to gratify her ambition and vengeance.

QUEEN CLAUDE OF FRANCE.

THIS princess was born at Romarantin in 1499, and affianced to the Count of Angoulême at Plessis-Tours in 1506; she was married to him at the age of fifteen, in the year 1514, at Saint Germain-en-Laye. Although endowed with the amiable qualities of her father, Louis XII., Claude had neither the talent nor energy of her mother, Anne of Brittany. She was unfortunate in having an inconstant husband, whom she tenderly loved, and an imperious mother-in-law in the regent, Louisa of Savoy; but her patience and gentleness enabled her to endure the humiliation of her self-love, and her domestic griefs, with resignation and dignity.

She was educated in a virtuous court under the scrupulous eye of her mother, and was remarkable for her piety and sweetness of temper, by which she obtained the appellation of "la bonne reine." But nature was not bountiful to her in physical gifts, having been of short stature, and in a slight degree lame; but though far from handsome, the expression of goodness dwelt upon her countenance.

Anne of Brittany, who appreciated the excellent qualities of her daughter, was fearful that the Count of Angoulême would not render her happy,

and endeavoured to dissuade Louis XII. from consenting to the union. She was desirous that Claude, in accordance with the agreement in the treaty of Blois, should marry the grandson of Ferdinand of Arragon; but the French protested against that alliance because the princess's dower consisted of the provinces of Brittany, which would have been separated from France by a foreign union, in consequence of which these political considerations instigated Louis XII. to give his consent, hoping that the young count would at least value Claude for her virtues and merits.

Although the queen was treated with indifference by her husband and the regent, she experienced great consolation in the sincere homage which the nation rendered to her estimable qualities. In 1524 she was attacked with a dangerous malady, of which she died at the age of twenty-five; and was buried in the royal sepulchre of Saint Denis.

Claude had seven children, four of whom were girls; she was the mother of the dauphin, Francis, who was poisoned at Valence in 1536; Henry II., King of France; Charles Duke of Orleans; Madeleine, wife of James V., King of Scotland; and Margaret, who married Philibert Emmanuel, Duke of Savoy: the other two died young.

QUEEN ELEONOR OF AUSTRIA.

THE treaty of Madrid in 1526 gave the eldest sister of the redoubtable Charles Quint to Francis I., but the engagement was not ratified until after the treaty of Cambrai, in 1529, which restored peace to France.

Eleonor was the daughter of Philip le Beau, Archduke of Austria, and of Jane la Folle, who, being left a widow at the age of twenty-six by a husband whom she adored, was so violently affected at his death that she lost her reason, and during the space of forty-four years languished in the most profound misery, forsaken and neglected by all

Her daughter Eleonor was born at Louvain in the Low Countries in 1498, and gifted with all the most brilliant endowments of nature. A contemporary author, who saw her, describes her as having laughing eyes, with eyebrows of fine black; a complexion of lilies and roses, small ivory teeth, a delicately formed mouth, and a mellifluous voice. In 1514, Frederick II., brother of the elector palatine, who was at the court of Charles Quint, became greatly enamoured of her, and the princess responded to his affection, which, though the at-

tachment was kept very secret, nevertheless reached the ears of the emperor.

One day Eleonor having received an affectionate billet, the politic Charles Quint entered her apartment unannounced, and wrested it from her hand before she had time to conceal it. The irritated monarch would have arrested Frederick had not the laws of hospitality prevented him; he, however, gave him an order to quit the court, and Eleonor's marriage with the old King of Portugal was decided. In 1519 the princess was united to her infirm husband, who left her a widow with two children in 1521.

On her return to the court of Spain, Prince Frederick again renewed his attentions to Eleonor in the hope of obtaining her hand and heart; but the young queen, having tasted the pleasures of the throne, and attaching invaluable charms to the possession of a crown, refused him. Her brother promised her hand to the Constable of Bourbon as the price of his services; but, whether that prince was indifferent respecting the promised recompence, or that Charles Quint, as was his usual habit, failed to keep his word, is uncertain, but Eleonor, who acquiesced in all her brother's ambitious views, graciously accepted the hand of Francis I. During

his imprisonment at Madrid the princess was delighted with the amiable and chivalric manners of her future husband, whose captivity she contributed to soften, as also that of the young princes who were sent as hostages. The marriage was celebrated at the abbey of Vegres, near Bordeaux, in 1530.

Eleonor loved France, and was delighted with the brilliant welcome she received : after partaking of the many elegant entertainments which were provided for in the different towns through which she passed, she at length entered Paris, and was crowned at Saint Denis in 1531.

The suavity of her manners and goodness of her heart rendered her the cherished idol of the court and people ; but she was as unfortunate as her predecessor, Claude, in the infidelities of her husband, who neglected her for the Duchess d'Etampes. The queen sensibly felt her husband's neglect, and even complained to her former lover, Frederick II., count palatine, who was at the court of France, and whom she made the confidant of her domestic troubles.

During the life of Claude, Francis I. had several obscure attachments, amongst whom were "la belle Ferronière," who was so called because her husband

trafficked in iron. That king nevertheless encouraged the cultivation of the arts and belles lettres, and patronised the learned whom he had brought with him from Italy. His court was brilliant with the luxury and gaiety introduced by the ladies; balls and fêtes, of which Francis I. was particularly fond, succeeded the more grave and imposing tournaments; and when he visited the residences of Madrid, Chambord, and Fontainebleau, he was accompanied by a society of the most beautiful ladies at court.

Some authors assert that amongst his favourites was the celebrated Anne Boleyn, grand-daughter to the Duke of Norfolk, and maid of honour to Queen Claude. An ancient writer says, "*Cette jeune demoiselle était belle, spirituelle, et d'une aimable vivacité; mais, dans un âge aussi tendre, fort débauchée en sa conduite.*" But this assertion is equally doubtful and uncharitable, for when, after her marriage with Henry VIII. at Westminster in 1536, she was condemned to be beheaded, Anne Boleyn was not accused, in the process of her trial, of any indiscretion during her service at the court of Francis I.

In one of the brilliant entertainments of which he was so fond, the king was captivated with Frances

de Foix, who was born in Brittany in 1495, and descended from a house not less noble than that of the royal family, but deprived of all fortune by the existence of three elder brothers. At the age of twelve years she was bestowed in marriage on John de Montmorenci Laval, Count of Châteaubriant.

At this inexperienced age the young victim was conducted by a jealous husband to an old château, where they lived together for seven years, isolated from all the world, and during that space of time the young countess was permitted to see none but her husband and attendants. Nevertheless the report of her beauty reached she court, where business of great importance obliged Monsieur de Châteaubriant to appear in 1515. He left the countess in Brittany, and the king did not fail to reproach him for his inhumanity in confining his young wife in a lonely place apart from all society. The count protested in vain that she hated the world and was devoted to retirement. Francis I. insisted that it was unnatural and impossible; and Monsieur de Châteaubriant, imagining that his submission to the king would forward his own views, conducted his wife to court.

At the very first entertainment in which she appeared, the fears of the unhappy husband were

aroused, for she made so forcible an impression on the heart of the king that the count became at once the victim of jealousy, which, in the sequel, proved to be but too well founded. The young countess, proud of a virtue which had never yet been attacked, placed too much reliance on her own strength and constancy, and fell before the tempter; her husband, in a transport of rage, refused the dignities offered him by Francis I., abandoned his process, the court, and his wife, now no longer his, and retired to Brittany. Madame de Châteaubriant's two brothers, Odet-de-Foix de Lantrée and Thomas-de-Foix de Lescun, more tractable, were appointed marshals of France, and the eldest, by his unskilful conduct, caused the defeat at the battle of Pavia.

During the expedition of Francis I. to Italy, his mother, the regent, neglected no opportunity of humiliating the countess, who, unhappy and ill used, on hearing of the defeat and captivity of the king, the death of her eldest brother at the battle of Pavia, and the imprisonment of the other two, one at Guyenne and the other at Navarre, felt herself without a protector, and addressed a respectful letter to her husband, entreating permission to return to him. Monsieur de Châteaubriant received her, but subjected her to a more wearisome impri-

sonment than before. He refused to see his repentant wife, and confined her in a tower, the room of which was hung round with black, to which he daily sent her the coarsest food.

In 1526 Francis I. returned to France, and the count, fearing he would recall Madame de Châteaubriant to the court, entered the tower with some hired assassins, and announced to her that she must die. The young victim, weary of a captivity which was far more terrible to her than death, cheerfully suffered her veins to be opened, and died without uttering a complaint, in 1527.

The king was greatly irritated at this cold-hearted and atrocious deed, but the vindictive husband took refuge in England, and before many months had expired the charms of Mademoiselle de Heilly enabled Francis I. to forget the unfortunate Countess de Châteaubriant. She was buried in the church of the Mathurins de Châteaubriant, where a magnificent tomb was erected to her memory. She had no children.

The most celebrated of all Francis I.'s favourites was Anne de Pisseleu de Heilly, a granddaughter of the house of Dreux, issue of blood-royal, and daughter of the Lord of Meudon, commandant of a hundred men-at-arms. She was born in Picardy

in 1508, and admitted into the service of Louisa of Savoy, Duchess d'Angoulême, in the quality of maid of honour. She accompanied this princess, when at Mont-de-Marsan, to the meeting of the king after he was set at liberty in 1526. Francis I. was much captivated with Mademoiselle de Heilly, who was then eighteen years of age, and united a beautiful person to an intellectual mind: these advantages gained for her the appellation of "*la plus savante des belles, et la plus belle des savantes.*"

The king made a declaration of love to her in verse, and the young lady, either from love or ambition, responded to the sentiments he expressed. Francis I. built a magnificent hôtel for her in the Rue de l'Hirondelle, near the Pont St. Michel, at Paris, and ornamented it with a variety of courtly devices, a style much in vogue at that period. He also provided her with a husband, to give her a less equivocal character at court. This person was a ruined gentleman, named John de Brosse, to whom she was married in 1527, and who received the government of Brittany and the duchy d'Etampes, as the price of his complaisance; this union did not, however, change the position of the duchess, who remained in high favour at court, far away from

her infamous husband, who was despatched to attend his duties in Brittany.

The Duchess d'Etampes received universal homage; all favours were obtained through her, and she participated in the affairs of government. She wisely made friends with the Constable Montmorenci, Admiral Chabot, and the Chancellor Duprat, —three ministers who were at the helm of affairs, and to whom she was as necessary as they were to her.

Her father, William de Pisseleu, had three wives and thirty children, and the duchess did not fail to make use of her influence in their favour, while in her elevated post. The first ecclesiastical dignities were bestowed on her brothers; two of her sisters were provided with wealthy abbeys, and the others were united to the first houses in the kingdom. She also protected and encouraged the learned, in conjunction with Francis I.'s sister, the Queen of Navarre, who entertained great friendship for her.

Surrounded as she was with admirers who did homage to her beauty and talent, courted for the power and influence she maintained in her brilliant situation, and intoxicated with the felicity which the possession of the king's love bestowed on her,

the duchess might, perhaps, have enjoyed a temporary happiness, had it not been for the rivalry which existed between her and the celebrated Diana of Poitiers, favourite of the dauphin, afterwards Henry II.

These two reigning beauties hated each other; the one sighed for the grandeur and power which the other possessed. Diana was older than the Duchess d'Etampes, but her great beauty and intriguing spirit placed her on a level with the woman whom she aspired towards replacing. Their mutual dislike was the constant topic at court, and more than once France had nearly been the victim of their dissensions.

The Duchess d'Etampes invariably endeavoured to make Diana of Poitiers feel the advantages she herself possessed in reigning young, and took pleasure in repeating that she was born the same day that Diana was married; the latter revenged herself by petty intrigues to undermine her in the king's favour, but her efforts were fruitless.

When Charles Quint visited Paris in 1540, the Duchess d'Etampes declared in open council that the emperor invariably broke his word, and was therefore not to be trusted; and she advised the king to detain him prisoner until he had fulfilled

his engagements with France. Francis greatly admired the foresight of his favourite, but was too generous and hospitable to yield to her proposals. The king, on presenting the Duchess d'Etampes to the emperor, said, "Voyez vous, mon frère, cette belle dame? Elle est d'avis que je ne vous laisse pas sortir de Paris que vous n'ayez revoqué le traité de Madrid." The emperor frowned, and replied coldly, "Si l'avis est bon, il faut le suivre;" and from that time Charles Quint made every effort to gain the heart of the duchess.

One day the favourite, according to the usual ceremony, presented him the towel after washing his hands, previous to seating himself at table, when Charles Quint purposely dropped a diamond ring of immense value; the duchess picked it up and presented it to him, when he gallantly replied, "Gardez-le; je suis trop heureux d'avoir l'occasion d'orner une si belle main." The duchess was constrained to accept the gift, but she was none the less faithful to Francis I., to whom she incessantly complained of the perfidious projects of the emperor.

It has, however, been said that, out of ill will to Diana of Poitiers, she conspired with the Marshal d'Aunebaut to prevent the success of the dauphin's

expedition against the Spaniards, and by that means betrayed her country, from petty and dishonourable motives. And a short time after this event the same envious wish to injure Diana in the person of the dauphin, and the hope of obtaining an asylum with the emperor in the event of the king's death, induced the duchess to perform an act of great perfidy, as, in 1544, she sold the secrets of the state to Henry VIII. of England and Charles Quint, for the iniquitous promise they made her to elevate the Duke of Orleans to the throne, to the detriment of his brother the dauphin. She also, with the same view, secretly advised with the forces of the dauphin's enemies who besieged Perpignan, and obliged the prince to blockade that place.

In fact, the enmity of these two women caused the taking of the principal towns in France, the scattering of the army from the security of the capital, towards which the enemy made rapid advances, the loss of many gallant officers, and the ignominious treaty of Cressy; all which disasters were the result of the criminal revelations made to Charles Quint by the Duchess d'Etampes' agent, the Count de Bassut.

The king grew both melancholy and morose before his death: nevertheless, neither the numerous

faults which she committed, nor time, which destroys all things, ever weakened his love for the duchess, who lived with him for twenty years.

At length his death, which occurred in 1547, put a term to the brilliant fortune of the favourite, who was neglected by those she had loaded with favours, haughtily attacked by her enemies, and without resources or protection obliged to give place to her rival, to whose vengeance she was exposed, and who, it may be almost said, mounted the throne with Henry II.

Her husband, of whom she had never taken any notice, refused to receive her : the proud mistress of Francis I., in this critical position, refused to bend the knee to the favourite of Henry II. ; and the triumphant Duchess of Valentinois astonished all France by disdaining to ill treat her fallen rival, whom she left at liberty to retire to a beautiful country residence, where the Duchess d'Etampes spent her latter years in solacing and protecting the followers of the Protestant religion, whose faith she had secretly embraced.

She quitted the court at the age of forty-four, and lived in such strict retirement until her death, that the circumstances attending it, and the exact period, are unknown ; it is, however, certain that

she was living in the year 1575, when she was sixty-seven years of age.

While Francis I. was devoting himself to the pleasures of the court and the enjoyment of the Duchess d'Etampes' society, the neglected queen, Eleonor of Austria, was earnestly endeavouring to establish peace between France and Spain, and, as far as lay in her power, frustrated the mischievous policy of the duchess, by attempting to inspire her powerful brother, Charles Quint, with more equitable and honourable sentiments. But the opposing influence of the favourite left her an inferior part to perform, and she chiefly occupied herself with religious duties, substituting hunting and fishing as an occasional diversion.

After the death of the king, Eleonor, who had no children, left France and retired to join her brother in Brabant. In 1556 she left the Low Countries for Spain, where she died at Talavera in 1558, aged sixty years. Eleonor was interred at the Escorial.

QUEEN AND REGENT CATHERINE DE MEDICIS.—DIANA OF POITIERS.

(Reign of Henry II.)

GRAND-NIECE of Leon X., and only daughter of Laurent de Medicis, Duke d'Urbino, and of Madeleine de la Tour d'Auvergne-Lauraguais, Catherine de Medicis was born at Florence in 1519, and educated in the bosom of her family, who governed that country with much celebrity.

On her marriage with the young Duke of Orleans, afterwards Henry II., in 1533, her uncle, Pope Clement VII., conducted her himself to Marseilles, where the ceremony was performed, and presented her on the occasion with a dower of three hundred thousand crowns.

This queen is equally celebrated for her talents and her crimes. Her ambitious and worldly-minded uncle, the pontiff, on taking leave of her after her marriage, gave her this express recommendation,—“*fa figliuoli* ;” and Catherine followed his counsel, for the Constable de Montmorency often remarked that Henry II. had but one daughter who resembled him, which was his natural daughter, Diana d'Angoulême.

On her arrival in France Catherine was received by the king, Francis I., and Eleonor of Austria, attended by a most brilliant court, amongst whom were the Duchess d'Etampes and Diana of Poitiers; but, beautiful as the ladies who composed this court were, Catherine outshone them all, not only by the loveliness of her features and the dazzling whiteness of her complexion, but also by the elegance of her movements, her form being exceedingly majestic though not tall. Her countenance most deceitfully expressed the feelings of a gentle and sensitive heart; skilful in displaying her attractions, at the tender age of fourteen, she exaggerated by artificial aid the advantages with which nature had adorned her.

During the first years of her marriage the young princess politically avoided all appearance of ambition, in a court already occupied by the two rivals Diana of Poitiers and the Duchess d'Etampes, with both of whom she contrived to live in the greatest harmony. She also displayed great tenderness for Francis I., who, gratified by the amiable manners and agreeable conversation of his daughter-in-law, frequently remarked that she was *made* to command. The king was fond of the chase, and Catherine affected a passion for that species of amuse-

ment, by which she repeatedly met with serious accidents. She was skilled in archery and rode gracefully ; it was this princess who invented pomelled saddles : she was also excessively fond of dancing, and excelled in ballets. By these trifling diversions Catherine deceived the general opinion, which at that time gave her no credit for more than ordinary talent ; nevertheless she observed all, studied politics, traced her future plans, and thus, by great sacrifices and perseverance, erected the edifice of her power.

The dauphin, Francis, having been poisoned in 1536, as some historians assert, through Catherine's means, the young Duke of Orleans became heir to the throne, and, as he had no children by Catherine, was desirous of divorcing her ; he could not, however perform this act without the king's acquiescence, and Francis, who was much attached to his daughter-in-law, warmly opposed it. Henry's mistress, Diana of Poitiers, also exerted her influence to prevent the rupture of this marriage, as she felt flattered by the princess's regard for her, and feared that another wife might treat her differently.

When the death of the king raised her husband to the throne, the queen pursued the same line of conduct, dissimulating her ambitious taste for

governing, and only studious to render herself popular by her complaisant manners. Perhaps Henry II. discovered the haughty and violent soul of his queen beneath her gentle exterior, for she possessed no authority, having only the title of queen, whereas the Duchess of Valentinois was virtually so.

She was crowned at Saint Denis, by the Cardinal de Bourbon, Archbishop of Sens, and made a solemn entry into Paris, accompanied by twelve duchesses, amongst whom were Diana d'Angoulême, Henry's natural daughter.

However, in 1552, when the king quitted France for his expedition to Germany, he left the regency to the queen, who performed nothing worthy of notice beyond conciliating all hearts in order to commence more securely her career of intrigue and crime when she should become mistress of absolute power. A celebrated historian says, "Catherine de Medicis contrived to obtain great popularity, and by her artfulness and profound dissimulation became the head of a large party of followers, caressing the king's favourite, whom she detested; flattering the pride of the constable by continually asking his advice, although she considered him her greatest enemy; and hesitating at nothing in order to attain her end."

Until the death of Henry II. there was nothing remarkable in the character of this queen beyond the voluntary favours she bestowed upon her husband's favourite, who was twenty years older than herself. Although bigotry was at that time much in vogue, she was but a lukewarm Catholic, and never assisted at any of the religious processions until she had procured the best singers and musicians from Italy to compose her chapel; nevertheless, under the pretext of zeal for her faith, she counselled and directed the massacre of Saint Bartholomew.

Henry II., who was killed by the Count of Montgomery at a tournament in honour of the marriage of his daughter Elizabeth with Philip II., King of Spain, left the regency to his widow, with whom he had lived twenty-five years, and who, after ten years of sterility, had ten children, three of whom were successively kings of France.

Catherine's first act of power was to dismiss her rival the Duchess of Valentinois, for whom it was no longer necessary for her to assume the appearance of friendship. This lady's family were no less celebrated for their noble origin than for their immorality: she was born in 1499, and was daughter of John of Poitiers, Lord of Saint Vallier, and

grand-daughter of Louis XI., by Margaret de Sas-senage. At the age of thirteen years she was married to Louis de Brézé, Grand Seneschal of Normandy, Count of Maulevrier, and grandson of Charles VII. by Agnes Sorel.

Diana would probably have been irreproachable in her conduct if her father, John of Poitiers, had not been condemned to death in 1524, for having joined in the revolt of the Constable de Bourbon, on which occasion she appeared at court, young, beautiful, and interesting in her grief, asking the royal pardon for her father on her knees. The gallant Francis I. raised her, and granted a portion of her prayer, moved, it is said, by a warmer sentiment than that of commiseration: she did not however remain long at court.

After nineteen years of marriage she became a widow, in 1531; when, in honour of her husband's memory, she erected a superb mausoleum in the church of Notre Dame de Rouen, and made a vow to wear mourning all her life; but the merit of this determination is somewhat diminished by the circumstances of her mourning habits having been white, and usually enriched by magnificent jewels. All the poets, whom she patronised, have celebrated her beauty and conjugal attachment.

On returning to the court after the death of the grand seneschal, Diana observed that the young dauphin's education had been much neglected, and proposed to the king to undertake the charge herself. It is astonishing how this lady, who was old enough to be the prince's mother, and who had two daughters of the same age as himself, contrived to captivate the heart of Henry, whose youth was then in the bud, and who appeared to respire but for her until the last moment of his life.

Some contemporary writers, friends of the marvellous, recount that Diana bewitched the dauphin with a mysterious ring which she possessed. No doubt her sorceries consisted in a beauty which braved the hand of time, a majestic figure, jet black hair, which fell in ringlets upon alabaster shoulders, graceful manners, musical tones, and above all the art of retaining the heart which she had conquered. Brantôme says, " J'ai vu Madame de Valentinois, à l'âge de soixante-sept ans, aussi belle et fraîche que trente ans auparavant, encore qu'elle se fût rompu une jambe sur la pavé d'Orléans en tombant de cheval."

The ill-will of the Duchess d'Etampes, who frequently circulated satirical remarks upon the age and pretensions of Diana, called forth offensive

reports from the latter respecting the duchess's conduct ; but these court feuds made no impression on the king or dauphin ; and Diana, who was proud of her royal origin, had sufficient influence to marry her eldest daughter to the Duke de Bouillon, Prince of Sedan, in 1538, and a little later formed an alliance for the second time with the Duke d'Aumale, uncle to Henry II.

The beauty of the dauphine, Catherine de Medicis, did not in the least diminish the attachment of Henry II. for his favourite. In her society he lost the unpolished manners which he had contracted in the use of arms and violent exercises ; and, notwithstanding Diana lived in the age of chivalry, in which the honour of the female sex was considered as a delicate flower that the least breath of detraction or calumny could wither, the most illustrious families in the kingdom did not hesitate to confide their daughters to her care at court. When elevated to the throne by the death of Francis I., Henry II. gave her absolute power to dispense the royal gifts and favours.

The king bestowed the title of Duchess de Valentinois upon his favourite ; and in the year 1549, to gratify her extravagant taste, instituted the fine of confirmation,—a tax which was paid on election

by the new functionaries before entering on the exercise of their duties. These subsidies were devoted to the construction of the sumptuous château d'Anet.

But Diana is reproached with infidelity to Henry notwithstanding all his bounty. She did not even attempt to conceal her attachment for Charles de Cossé-Brissac, of which the king was informed, but who, far from coldly dismissing his ungrateful favourite, then fifty-two years of age, displayed great jealousy, and resolved to exile Brissac. However, to avoid irritating Diana, he appointed him governor of Piedmont, in 1551, and she persuaded him to add to the dignity that of Marshal of France. Thus she dispensed gifts and favours according to her will. In conjunction with the Constable de Montmorenci, she procured the disgrace of the Admiral d'Aunebaut and the Cardinal Tournon, both zealous servants of the king. With all her power Diana skillfully managed the queen, whom she treated with great respect; and Catherine, on her part, assumed an amicable sentiment for the duchess, who, when the queen was dangerously attacked with the quinsy in Lorrain, attended her with unaffected zeal and tenderness.

But the Duchess de Valentinois merits the most

severe censure and contempt for her intimacy with the Cardinal of Lorraine, at whose solicitation she exerted her influence over Henry II. to induce him to persecute the Protestants (many of whom he ordered to be burned), and to violate the treaty he had entered into with Spain; from which resulted most of the misfortunes that signalised the latter part of his reign, particularly the defeat at Saint Quentin, in 1557, in which the Constable Montmorenci and the Marshals Chatillon and Saint André were taken prisoners.

The king on more than one occasion excited the jealousy of the duchess. His daughter, Diana d'Angoulême, who was said to resemble him so much, was the child of Philippa Duc, who was born at Montechiaro in 1538, and by her extreme beauty captivated Henry when at Coni, in Piedmont, with the Constable Montmorenci. His courtiers set fire to the house in which this young girl resided, and, under favour of the obscurity and tumult, conveyed her to the king's palace. After the birth of her daughter she took the vows, and died in her convent.

Another object of his attachment was a young lady named Nicol de Savigny, by whom he had a son, Henry de Saint Remi, afterwards gentleman of the chamber to Henry III.

On the occasion of a fête which Catherine de Medicis gave to the king, she composed a ballet, which was to be performed by the dauphine, Mary Stuart; Queen Elizabeth of Spain; Clarissa Strozzi, a relation of Catherine's; Madame Claude of France; and Miss Lewiston (sometimes called "Flamyn"), who was descended from an illustrious Scotch family, and maid of honour to Mary Stuart, and whom Henry greatly admired.

In order to visit this young lady clandestinely, the king was in the habit of enveloping himself in a large sheet, and assuming the appearance of a ghost; but the Duchess of Valentinois discovered his trick, and obliged him to send Miss Lewiston out of the kingdom: previous to her departure she gave birth to Henry Duke of Angoulême, Grand Prior of France, and Admiral and Governor of Provence.

The execution of Mary Stuart so sensibly affected Mary Lewiston that she languished and died in 1588.

When Henry II. met his death-blow at the tournament, in which he fought decorated with the colours of his mistress, then nearly sixty years of age, the queen peremptorily ordered Diana to retire to her own hôtel, forbade her to enter the king's chamber, and bluntly demanded the restoration of

some diamonds of the crown which were in her possession.

It was then the Duchess de Valentinois' turn to be despoiled of her grandeur and abandoned by her friends. The Constable de Montmorenci alone proved grateful to her; and the queen would have wreaked her vengeance on her fallen rival, if the Duke d'Aumale by his persuasions had not prevented this affront to the memory of Henry II. She was permitted to retire to the château d'Anet, which she had ornamented in a most scandalous style of luxury and extravagance. To gratify the Cardinal of Lorraine she had with equal prodigality erected an immense number of convents, the rumour of which caused the advocate-general, Dumesnil, to demand from her a restitution of seventy-six thousand livres and fifteen hundred crowns, for the succour of the borderers of the Loire, who had been despoiled to that amount by her agents.

Two years after the death of Francis II., which occurred in 1560, Catherine de Medicis, forgetting, in her political views, that the Duchess of Valentinois had once possessed the heart of her husband, and thinking that her skill in intrigue would be useful to her, recalled her to court, where Diana willingly seconded her ambitious purposes; but she

did not long enjoy the fruits of this reconciliation, having died in 1566, at the age of sixty-seven, and was buried in the chapel of her château d'Anet.

The portal of this château is preserved at the Musée des Augustins in Paris, as also the tomb of Diana, surmounted by her statue, in which she is represented in a reclining position, surrounded by the attributes of the goddess of the chace. The exquisite workmanship of this monument renders it an invaluable relic.

Of her two daughters by Henry II., one, Diana of France, was married to Horatio Farnese, Duke of Castro, and afterwards to François de Montmorenci; the other espoused Claude de Lorraine. Henry II. would have legitimized these two children, but the duchess opposed it, saying, "I was your mistress because I loved you, but I will not suffer an edict to proclaim my weakness."

The all-powerful Catherine, by her moderate treatment of her rival, gained over many of the partisans that the favourite had acquired during her long prosperity; she also conciliated the Duke of Montpensier by giving him a wealthy possession, and the Prince of La Roche-sur-Yon by appointing his wife her "*dame d'honneur*."

The kingdom was torn by the factions of the

princes of the blood, the Guises and the Montmorencis, amongst whom she unceasingly created divisions, always attaching herself to the strongest party, which she invariably confounded in the end by her intrigues. By these means she was three times regent of France—under Francis II., Charles IX., and Henry III. before his return from Poland.

Catherine made choice of the most approved councillors, amongst whom were the Cardinal of Lorraine; Montluc, Bishop of Valence; Samblancay, Archbishop of Bourges; and, above all, the upright and virtuous Chancellor de l'Hôpital, whose influence lasted too short a time for the welfare of his country.

The regent was not equally skilful in regard of the Protestants, who attacked her government, and published Memoirs, in which she was accused of unlawfully taking part in the administration: the conspiracy of Amboise completely drew upon them the hatred of this arrogant queen, although she was very indifferent to matters of religion, and at one time even affected an attachment for the Protestants, whose discontents she favoured when necessary to her projects; but in contesting the regency they committed an offence which she considered quite unpardonable.

During the short reign of her eldest son, Francis II., who ascended the throne in 1559 [and died in 1560, Catherine's power wavered; for the king had married Mary Stuart, niece to the Guises, who were rendered all-powerful in France in consequence of the affection of Francis II. for his wife.

On the occurrence of his death, Charles IX. succeeded to the throne, and his minority caused a new regency; to obtain which Catherine offered, as the price of that power, the lives and liberty of the Prince of Condé and the King of Navarre, both of whom were condemned to death in consequence of their conspiracy at Amboise; and those princes, preferring life and freedom to power, agreed to her proposal: her government was therefore proclaimed by the states assembled at Orleans.

In 1562 the King of Navarre again raised the standard of revolt, in which he was joined by all the Calvinists; and the queen, alarmed by this rebellion, left Paris for Melun: she also provided other retreats in case of necessity, by conferring the government of Normandy on the Sire of Matignon, and giving one of her daughters to the Duke of Savoy, as well as restoring him several places of which he had been deprived by the treaty of Cateau Cambresis.

But these resources were not needed, fortune having declared itself on her side. The King of Navarre was killed at the siege of Rouen, and his party was so much weakened by his loss that Catherine ventured to propose an amnesty to the Protestants, although she entertained a strong resentment against them. The battle of Dreux, in which the celebrated Marshal Saint André perished, ruined the hopes of the reformers.

The last obstacle to the queen-regent's peaceable enjoyment of her power was the Duke de Guise, who was assassinated at Orleans, by Poltrot, in 1563. Catherine on learning this news shed tears of joy. She at once dismissed the virtuous l'Hôpital, whose probity was a restraint to her; and, unscrupulous as to the means she employed to gratify her taste for governing, continued to foment divisions between those whose attachment she doubted, and by weakening the state secured her own tranquillity; on the other hand, she loaded her partisans with favours, and augmented their numbers daily.

Although forty-three years of age, she still possessed great beauty, of which it is asserted that she made political use, having accorded her smiles to the Vidame of Chartres, the Cardinal of Lorraine, the Duke de Nemours, the Duke de Guise, the Prince

de Condé, and even to a private gentleman of Brittany named Troile de Mesquez.

She also attracted all the nobility to the court by the various diversions that she invented; her maids of honour, the number of whom exceeded two hundred, performed in ballets and theatricals which she composed, and Catherine did not hesitate to make use of their attractions also to serve her political purposes; she corrupted her court and her own children, not even excepting Margaret de Valois, whom she frequently conducted to the Place de Grève in Paris, to witness the executions.

Catherine was however very industrious: a follower of the school of Alexander VI. and the Borgias, she diligently studied Machiavelism, incessantly corresponded in French and Italian, and added lustre to her diadem by the discerning and generous patronage she bestowed on artists, who have acknowledged their debt of gratitude to her in the eulogies they have handed down to posterity.

This luxurious queen left the palace of Tournelles for that of the Tuileries, which she built, and where she surpassed all the beauties who surrounded her by her majestic air and graceful manners. It was this palace that her superstitious notions induced her to abandon in 1564.

Although gifted with an intellectual mind, Catherine, who had no religious faith, believed in ghosts and spirits: she always wore upon her bosom the skin of an infant whose throat had been cut; this amulet was covered with mysterious characters of different colours, and she was persuaded that it possessed the virtue of preserving her from all injury. She brought diviners and astrologers with her from Italy, amongst whom was the celebrated Cosmo Ruggieri. This astrologer having predicted that she would die at Saint Germain, she avoided every place that bore that name; and as the palace of the Tuileries happened to be situated in a wood near the parish of Saint Germain l'Auxerrois, she ordered the erection of the Hôtel de Soissons, near Saint Eustache, where she resided, and to which she adjoined an observatory column, which still exists in the spot of the Halle aux Blés. This column contains a secret staircase, by which the queen ascended with her astrologers to consult the stars and armillary sphere, and to seek in their various positions the perspective of a happiness which the sinful cannot hope to enjoy.

To these faults and weaknesses Catherine joined some great qualities; she intrepidly assisted at the siege of Rouen in 1562, by encouraging the soldiers

in the midst of the fight, heedless of the balls and bullets which flew around her : she afterwards took possession of Havre de Grace, which was occupied by the English, and made a negotiation with Elizabeth of England, by which that powerful queen evacuated the coasts of Normandy, which had been ceded to her by the Protestants during the civil war. At this time all Europe was governed by women—England by Elizabeth ; Scotland by Mary Stuart ; Portugal by the infanta, daughter of Eleonor ; Navarre by Queen Jane ; the Low Countries by the natural daughter of Charles Quint ; Spain by Isabella of France ; and France by Catherine de Medicis.

Wishing to deprive the Prince de Condé of his post of lieutenant-general of the kingdom, the queen-regent in 1565 offered to divide the government with her son, Charles IX., then fourteen years of age, and had her project declared by the parliament at Rouen. The irritated Condé again revolted and attempted to seize the king and the queen-mother at Meaux in 1566 ; but the defeat of the Protestants at Saint Denis, by the Constable Montmorenci, strengthened the power of the regent, and gave her the leisure and the means of forming her projects of vengeance.

At Bayonne, consequently, she resolved, in concert with the pope's agents, and Isabella of Spain, assisted by the Duke of Alba, to attempt the destruction of the Protestants, and was frequently accompanied in her interviews by the young King of Navarre, to whom she was particularly attached. This prince, who all his life watched over the interests of France, although at the tender age of thirteen, fully understood the nature of these plots, and informed his mother, who warned the Prince de Condé and the Admiral Coligny ; in consequence of which the massacres were adjourned. This youth was afterwards Henry the Great.

Catherine, who imagined that her sanguinary projects would be more easily executed at Paris, unceasingly endeavoured to attract a great number of Protestants there by warm invitations and brilliant promises : she could not, however, succeed in alluring either Condé or Coligny, who continued the civil war ; she therefore proceeded to the army with her young son, Henry of Anjou, then only sixteen years of age.

In 1567, on the fête of Saint Denis, Catherine's redoubtable enemy, the Constable de Montmorenci, was killed ; and in 1569, the battle of Jarnac, in which Condé was slain, and of Montcontour, in

which Catherine had the satisfaction of seeing her son Henry the first captain in Europe, crushed the Protestants without destroying their hopes, and, although there was much carnage, did not shake the frightful resolution the queen-mother had formed of subjecting them to a more complete massacre.

Hitherto it had been difficult to attract a great number of Protestants to Paris ; it was necessary to inspire them with confidence. Catherine undertook the task, and, urged by the Cardinal of Lorraine, and seconded by her son, Charles IX., she employed the immense resources of her talent in seduction and perfidy.

She invited the Queen of Navarre and Admiral Coligny to the capital, but both had the prudence to refuse ; she then sent Biron with a proposal of marriage between her own daughter, Margaret de Valois, and the Queen of Navarre's young son, Henry, Prince of Béarn. After some hesitation, this apparently frank and cordial offer was accepted, and they arrived at Blois, where they were welcomed by the king and the queen-mother.

The court assembled at Paris to make preparations for the marriage, and Jane d'Albret, Queen of Navarre, was so disgusted at the corrupt manners of the inmates of the royal dwelling, that she

was desirous of flying from it, but was prevented by her death, she having been poisoned by Catherine's perfumer ! In reading the history of this queen, the imagination is dismayed at the diabolical arts by which so many illustrious persons fell, to serve the purposes and fortune of the ambitious daughter of Medicis. Neither this event, nor a thousand other secret indications, seemed to awaken the suspicions of the Protestants, for this deceitful queen calmly prepared garlands, fêtes, and ballets with all the appearance of sincerity ! like the ancients, who decorated their victims with flowers, and conducted them to the sacrifice in the midst of music and the dance.

The most sanguinary page in the annals of France is offered to the memory in the massacres of Saint Bartholomew, which took place on the 24th of August, 1572, and were resolved on and arranged in the Tuileries by Catherine and the Dukes of Anjou, Nevers, and Angoulême. Admiral Coligny was to be the first victim, and the general massacre was to follow. All was determined with a frightful secrecy : the barriers of Paris were locked and guarded, and the signal was the clock of Saint Germain l'Auxerrois. Sad and anxious, Charles IX. waited in secret horror for

the hour of the massacre. His mother, fearing his irresolution, passed the night beside him, reassured him, and prevented him from countermanding his order; to hasten the performance of which, she caused the tocsin to be sounded before the arrival of the hour.

Coligny's house was forced; the assassins rushed upon him, regardless of his white hairs, and despatched him with many blows, after which they threw his body out of the window; then followed the screams of the dying and the shouts of the murderers. None were spared; the streets and squares were strewn with the corpses of the old and young of both sexes, who had been assassinated in their beds and thrown from their windows. When morning arose to lighten this frightful scene of tragedy, blood ran through the streets, and dyed the borders of the river. "Les corps détranchés tombaient des fenêtres, les portes-cochères étaient bouchées de corps achevés ou languissants, et les rues de cadavres qu'on traînait sur le pavé à la rivière."

The King of Navarre's gentlemen were killed in the Louvre, and the infamous Charles IX., grown ferocious at the sight of blood, armed with a carbine, and standing on the meridional balcony of the

Louvre, fired on the unhappy Protestants who endeavoured to swim across the Seine. The carnage lasted three days, after which the queen left her palace to contemplate this work of her revenge, accompanied by her children and her maids of honour. Orders for the same scenes of execution were sent to all the provinces in France, and sixty thousand inhabitants fell to satisfy the bloodthirsty Catherine. History affords the names of those governors who rejected her mission with horror; they were Messieurs de Tendy, de Charny, de Saint-Heran, Tannequy-le-Veneur, de Gordes, de Mandelot, and d'Orthes.

An Italian cut off the head of Coligny, and offered it to Catherine, who, after attentively examining it for some time, ordered that sad trophy of her cruelty to be embalmed, and sent to Rome to Pope Gregory XIII., who dared to blaspheme Heaven by publicly returning thanks for the massacre.

After this period the queen-mother plunged into every species of depravity, infected France with all the vices of Italy, and favoured and encouraged the disorderly conduct of her sons, in order to deprive them of the energy requisite for governing. She instituted, amongst other diversions, battles between beasts, and accompanied her children to witness the

tortures and executions of the condemned ; after which she gave them feasts, in which her maids of honour, crowned with flowers, and habited as goddesses, served the young princes at table.

Charles IX.'s disposition, after the massacres of Saint Bartholomew, became sad and melancholy : he was constantly filled with terror ; and, struck with a mortal malady in the flower of his age, he experienced but indifference and neglect from most of his relations. He believed himself to be surrounded with spectres, had frightful dreams, in which his terrified imagination beheld rivers of blood and heaps of ghastly corpses, and fancied that the air was constantly filled with doleful sounds and plaintive accents. He sighed continually, and had an insupportable weight of grief at his heart ; remorse doubtless abridged his days, which renders him at least worthy of compassion, for he was sensible of his crimes and dreaded the Divine anger, whereas the real author and instigator of the massacre never displayed the least sign of repentance ; indeed, Catherine is said to have declared that she had only six of the murders of that eventful night upon her conscience ; which, if the statement is correct, bespeaks a most frightful security ! When dying, Charles IX. repulsed his

mother with horror, and fell into convulsions whenever she attempted to approach him.

The queen-mother experienced little grief at the loss of this son, having always a preference for the duke of Anjou; some chronicles state that Louis XIII. often repeated that Charles IX. was poisoned by Catherine de Medicis. This queen saw with pleasure the continuation of her authority, until Henry III., who was elected King of Poland in 1573, returned to France and assumed the reins of government in 1574. But this prince was no longer the valiant conqueror of Jarnac and Montcontour, having grown indolent, and his ambitious mother encouraged this disposition.

In 1575 Henry III. married Louise of Lorraine, niece to the Duke de Guise; and Catherine, fearing that the young queen's uncle would obtain too much influence over the king, created a division between the royal pair. Accordingly, the indignant Protestants again revolted; but the queen-mother arrested the King of Navarre and the Marshals Montmorenci and de Cossé, who headed them, but the king rendered them their liberty in 1576, and granted them places of security. Catherine consoled herself by prevailing on the Pope to excommunicate the King of Navarre in 1585.

This queen's astrologers had foretold that her four sons would be kings, and she made every effort to procure a foreign crown for the fourth, who was Duke d'Alençon, for she loved Henry III. too much to wish that the fourth prince should succeed to the throne through his death. She therefore despatched Monsieur de Noailles to obtain the regency of Algiers for him from the sultan, Selim II., with the view of composing a kingdom for that prince by the addition of the island of Sardinia. This ambitious woman also despatched a fleet in 1580 to maintain her pretensions to the crown of Portugal, but in that enterprise she failed.

The formation of the league in 1585 augmented her power, but threw France into the most terrible disorder; the Duke de Guise placed himself at the head of the revolt, and plunged the nation into an abyss of trouble, which the accession of Henry the Great alone put an end to.

After the celebrated "day of barricades," in 1588, the king, who was defeated by the League, and obliged to quit Paris, at length discerned the source of all the evil; he, therefore, forbid his mother's appearance in the council, and loaded her with bitter reproaches. The rage to which Catherine gave vent in consequence brought on a

violent fever, of which she died at Blois, in 1589, aged seventy years. This queen deservedly carried to the tomb the execration of the people.

Her children were—besides Francis II., Charles IX., and Henry III.—Louis, Victoria, and Jane, who died in their infancy; Francis Duke d'Alençon and Brabant; Elizabeth, wife of Philip II., King of Spain; Claude, married to Charles II., Duke de Lorraine; and Margaret de Valois, first wife of Henry the Great.

In consequence of there being no materials at Blois necessary for the process of embalming, Catherine's remains were soon decomposed; her body was, therefore, transferred without pomp to the church of Saint Sauveur at Blois, where she was obliged to be buried in the night. In 1609 (twenty-one years after her burial) her coffin was transported to Saint Denis, and placed in the mausoleum which she erected for her husband and herself.

Châteaubriand, in his remarks on this queen, says, "Catherine was an Italian, and educated in a republican principality; she was accustomed to popular storms, factions, intrigues, secret poisonings, and midnight murders; she had no aristocratic and monarchical prejudices—that haughtiness

towards the great and contempt for the little, those pretensions to divine right and monopoly of absolute power; she was unacquainted with our laws, and had little respect for them; for she attempted to place the crown of France upon the head of her daughter. Like the Italians of her time, she was superstitious, but incredulous in her religious opinions and in her unbelief; had no real aversion to the Protestants, but sacrificed them for political reasons. In fact, if we trace all her actions, we shall perceive that she looked upon this vast kingdom, of which she was the sovereign, as an enlarged Florence; and considered the riots of her little republic, the quarrels of the Pozzi and the Medicis, as the struggles of the Guises and Chatillons."

As the mother of kings, the guardian of her children, and the regent of the kingdom, Catherine's character is a problem difficult to solve. She was more circumspect than enterprising, and supplied the want of a vigorous chief by the craftiness and cunning of her sex and country; she neither did wrong for the pleasure of committing evil, nor good from a natural principle of virtue, for her merits and vices depended mostly on moments and circumstances. In reflecting on the annals of empires,

how frequently the destinies of thousands depend upon the lightest incidents! At the insurrection of Florence, in 1528, Catherine de Medicis several times narrowly escaped death. The rebels, having seized her, conveyed her to a convent: one of them proposed to suspend her from the walls, exposed to the fire of the artillery, and another wished to give her up to the brutality of the soldiers; but she escaped all these dangers, in order to burthen France with trouble for the space of fifty-six years!

Nevertheless, her love for the arts does her honour. Besides the Tuileries and the Hôtel de Soissons which she built at Paris, she erected the beautiful Château de Chenonceaux in Touraine; she also enriched the royal library of Paris with a great number of Greek and Latin manuscripts, and with a portion of the books which her great-grandfather, Laurent de Medicis, purchased from the Turks after the taking of Constantinople.

QUEEN MARY STUART.

(Reign of Francis II.)

ALLIED to the houses of Bourbon and Medicis, niece of Henry VIII., King of England, and daughter of

James V. of Scotland and of Mary de Lorraine-Guise, Mary Stuart, who is celebrated in the annals of three kingdoms, and has occupied the world with her romantic life and tragical death, was born in the castle of Linlithgow in Edinburgh, in the year 1542. A week after her birth, the death of her father raised her to the throne under the guardianship of her mother, and she was crowned at the age of nine months, at Stirling, by the Cardinal Beaton, Archbishop of Saint-Andrew's.

The hand of the young Queen of Scotland was sought by both England and France. Henry VIII. was desirous of marrying Mary to his son Edward, in order to unite the two kingdoms; and Henry II. made every effort to preserve an alliance with a country that had always powerfully assisted the French in their struggles with the English. The Count of Arran, Regent of Scotland, destined Mary for his son; but, when the Count de Montgomeri was sent to that country to oppose the incursions of the English who were ravaging their borders, the nobles, to testify their gratitude, accorded the hand of their young queen to Francis II., Dauphin of France, and thus, through the skilful negotiations of the Cardinal de Lorraine and the Duke de Guise, England lost this rich possession.

In the mean time, Mary was educated in a convent in the middle of the lake of Monteith, with four companions, all of whom bore the name of Mary; and the queen-mother, seeing her daughter safely surrounded by a corps of Henry II.'s troops, publicly declared that the Queen of Scotland was affianced to the Dauphin of France.

In order to transport her safely to France, a fleet waited near the coast, and she was placed under the charge of the Count de Brézé, who with a military escort conducted her from Dumbarton Castle on board of a French galley stationed at the mouth of the Clyde. She was accompanied by her natural brother, James Stuart, William Lewiston, John Airskins, and her four female companions and namesakes. After much manœuvring to avoid the English fleet who pursued her, Mary landed at Brest, and proceeded by short journeys to Saint Germain, where her health and education were equally attended to. At the age of six years, her beauty and sweetness of disposition rendered her the idol of the court. Her form and movements were strikingly elegant, her features regular, her eyes and hair deep brown, and her complexion a dazzling white. There was a charm in all her words and actions, which drew this remark from

Catherine de Medicis :—" Notre petite reinette Ecossaise n'a qu'à sourire pour tourner toutes ces têtes Françaises."

Mary possessed an astonishing facility for acquiring languages, having at the age of fourteen spoken six with fluency; her imagination was brilliant, and in the presence of Henry II., Catherine de Medicis, and the court, she delivered with her natural eloquence an address in Latin, which she had herself composed, and in which she maintained that it was the duty of all women to cultivate the belles-lettres. In 1550 she nearly fell a victim to poison, which was administered to her by one of the king's archers of the Scotch guard.

In 1558, the dauphin, who was sincerely attached to his fiancée, entreated the king to suffer their union to take place, and, as there were no opposing obstacles, the marriage ceremony was performed at Notre Dame de Paris, on a theatre expressly erected in front of the church-door. After the celebration of the union, the Scotch ambassadors presented Mary with her sceptre and crown, and she was styled the queen-dauphine.

England regarded with jealousy the advantages France possessed by this marriage. Scotland had become a prey to religious factions, and groaned

under the violence of the agents sent by France to introduce the Catholic faith; and Mary, who entertained great repugnance for the excesses committed in her name, became odious to her subjects.

At the death of Mary Queen of England, the queen-dauphine, who was niece to Henry VIII., assumed the title of Queen of England, to the exclusion of Elizabeth, daughter of Anne Boleyn, whom the Catholics considered illegitimate. The dauphin, who became king in 1559, died in 1560; and Mary, who had borne the title of queen of three kingdoms, felt herself despoiled of all save the name, for Elizabeth's skilful conduct rendered any attempt at supplanting her useless.

Mary would gladly have remained in France, content to be queen-dowager of that kingdom only, for she felt that she could not live so happily in her own wild and less polished country; but the politic and suspicious Catherine de Medicis opposed her wishes, fearing that, if her son, Charles IX., married her, she would govern the empire of France in the king's name.

Mary was deeply affected at the loss of her young husband, and would frequently sing elegies which she composed, and accompany herself on the lute :—

*"Si je suis en repos,
Someillant sur ma couche,
J'oy qu'il me tient propos,
Je le sens qui me touche :
En labeur, en recoy,
Toujours est près de moi."*

She at first retired to her uncle, the Cardinal de Lorraine, at Rheims, where she received a summons from Elizabeth to renounce the title of Queen of England and Ireland, which she refused to do; and, finding herself but indifferently supported by her uncle in her projects of remaining in France, embarked at Calais in 1561.

On her departure she addressed most affecting adieux to the hospitable land that had sheltered her childhood. Leaning against the poop of the vessel with her eyes fixed upon the coast, she burst into tears when the land grew distant, and remained five hours in the same attitude, constantly repeating "Adieu, France! adieu, France!" When night came, she refused to descend to the cabin; a carpet was spread on the deck where she lay, but she could not be prevailed on to take any nourishment. She desired the helmsman to awaken her at the first glimmer of daylight, that she might catch one more glimpse of the French soil; and when the break of day permitted her a last look at her che-

rished France, she saluted it with these words:—
“Adieu la France! adieu donc, ma très chère France! cela est fait; adieu la France! je pense ne vous voir jamais plus.” Another exile, who recently sought shelter in Mary Stuart’s deserted palace of Holyrood, might have pronounced the same words. The verses in which Mary expressed her regrets are well known:—

“Adieu! plaisant pays de France;
O ma patrie,
La plus chérie,
Qui as nourri ma jeune enfance.
Adieu, France! adieu, mes beaux jours!”

Some historians assert that her grief was increased by the circumstance of her being attached to the Constable Montmorenci, but this is doubtful; her heart was more probably full of the image of her lost husband, whose remains reposed in that land of her love. But if it had been the case, and the constable had been free to have united his hand to that of this queen, he would probably have governed Scotland wisely, Mary’s name would be free from the stain of blood, and Elizabeth’s from the crime of regicide.

Mary’s pretensions to the throne of England drew on her the hatred of Elizabeth, who, informed of her return to Scotland by the Earl of Murray,

sent out several vessels to arrest her rival; she however escaped, under favour of a thick fog, and after five days' sail disembarked at Leith, and made her entry into Edinburgh. She found the country in confusion on account of the religious differences; the Catholic faith was proscribed, and her chaplain's life attempted; the people, excited by her natural brother the Earl of Murray, proclaimed that they had an idolatrous queen, and displayed many proofs of hatred towards her.

Mary requested Elizabeth to acknowledge her as heir to the throne of England—a demand which was not unreasonable, as she was obliged afterwards to admit the same rights in the person of her son, James VI. It has been said that one of the conditions upon which this acknowledgment was to be granted was Mary's marriage with the Earl of Leicester, to whom Elizabeth was attached, and which proposal was doubtless a ruse of the Queen of England's to prevent other alliances, which were offered to the Queen of Scotland from all sides, especially by the Archduke Charles of Austria, son of Ferdinand I., and Don Carlos, son of Philip II. of Spain.

Although Mary hardly escaped being seized by the English vessels, the two queens were at first

very amicable, and even exchanged presents. In 1564 Mary sent Elizabeth a superb diamond, accompanied by a letter written in Latin, which both these queens were well versed in ; and the Queen of Scotland was the dupe of the Queen of England's deceitful demonstrations of friendship, which however did not last long. Mary encouraged the Catholics in England ; Elizabeth excited the Protestant faction in Scotland : thus religious differences produced dissensions between these two queens, who governed in the same island.

Instead of contracting an alliance with a prince who could have sustained and protected her against the ambition and jealousy of Elizabeth, Mary married, in 1565, her cousin Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley, a young man nineteen years of age, grandson of Henry VIII., and, like Mary, a Catholic and aspirant to the throne of England. Mary's natural brother, the Earl of Murray, stirred up the discontented, but the queen took up arms and dispersed the rebels, after which she bestowed the title of king upon her husband.

Shortly after, her enemies persuaded Darnley that the queen entertained an affection for David Rizzio, a Piedmontese, belonging to the suite of the ambassador of Savoy, whose talents she admired,

but who was ugly and deformed : she accorded him her confidence in the administration of the state, appointed him to the office of private secretary, and admitted him at her table. One evening when supping at Holyrood with the Earl of Argyle, her natural sister, and Rizzio, Darnley precipitately entered the room, accompanied by the Lords Ruthven, Douglas, and others, and declared that he had come to take the life of Rizzio: the unfortunate Italian threw himself at his mistress's feet, and implored her protection. In vain the queen employed entreaties and menaces ; while clinging to her robes, and endeavouring to shelter himself near her person, he was despatched at the feet of his sovereign with repeated blows of the poignard, in 1566. Mary, who was at the time pregnant, experienced so much alarm at this horrible spectacle, that the impression is said to have been communicated to her child, James VI. of Scotland and I. of England, who could never look upon an unsheathed sword without terror.

At the sight of Rizzio's bleeding corpse, Mary, who was overpowered with indignation, exclaimed, "I will not deplore, but I will avenge him." She caused his body to be buried in the tomb of the Kings of Scotland, which created great indignation.

Henry Stuart, who was attacked with indisposition at the residence of his father in Glasgow, was persuaded by the queen to remove to a house belonging to the collegiate provost of St. Mary, where he perished, and the tragedy is imputed to Mary, who is considered by some to have acquiesced in the murder of her husband for the purpose of marrying her lover, the Earl of Bothwell. Letters were afterwards produced which were declared to have been addressed by the queen to Bothwell, in which she accedes to his project of assassination.

The unfortunate prince and his domestics were strangled in their beds, and the house blown up with gunpowder. The same histories state that Mary, instead of enclosing herself for forty days, appeared in public immediately after her husband's murder, and in a short time married the assassin Bothwell, whom she created Duke of Orkney.

In consequence of this criminal conduct, or rather the belief in it, the people revolted, and Mary was besieged in the castle of Borthwick, where, abandoned by her cowardly husband, she fell into the power of the insurgents, who conducted her to Edinburgh, all the way displaying to her view a banner on which was painted a representation of Darnley's corpse.

Confined in Lochleven Castle, under the care of Lady Murray, mother of the brutal earl, Mary was forced to sign her abdication and the Earl of Murray's regency. She contrived to escape from her captivity through the assistance of a youth (William Douglas) sixteen years of age. At Hamilton she found a small army of six thousand men, but, attacked by superior forces, she was defeated at Langside.

Having no vessel to convey her to France, Mary proceeded to England by the Gulf of Solway, and entreated the assistance which Elizabeth had so often insidiously offered. Elizabeth replied that she would accord her protection when she had justified herself of the crimes imputed to her. At the same time the Earl of Lennox demanded justice for the murder of his son Darnley, and Murray sent the Queen of England a case of papers consisting of correspondence purporting to be the letters of the Queen of Scotland to Bothwell. This nobleman when dying publicly declared that Mary had no hand whatever in the murder of Darnley.

The third period of Mary's life begins with her introduction to England, and, supposing her to have been guilty of the crimes imputed to her, the treatment she received there is sufficient to efface

all recollection of them. The narrow-minded Elizabeth, mistress of her rival, nourished such violent sentiments of envy that she could not endure to hear her name pronounced; forgetting the claims of misfortune and the rights of hospitality, she arrogated to herself the power of arresting the Queen of Scotland, and issued orders for her trial.

The unhappy victim found a friend in the Duke of Norfolk, who protected her in her captivity, and would have married her; he even formed a party for her in London, but his head paid the price of his temerity. Philip II., King of Spain, in conjunction with Pope Pius V., also prepared to invade England on her account; but these attempts proved misfortunes for Mary, who was more closely confined, and, in addition to the other crimes laid to her charge, was accused of conspiracy.

The extreme loveliness of Mary Stuart had always, as has been stated by her partisans, grieved the heart of Elizabeth, who, they assert, had no pretensions to physical advantages of any kind; and she is represented as so revengeful as not to be satisfied until her rival's beautiful head should roll on the scaffold. It is insinuated that, if Mary *did really* plot in her prison, the snare was purposely laid for her. There are, however, good reasons for

believing that her superiority of talents and charms cost her her life. Ballard and Babington, two enthusiastic Catholics, resolved to assassinate Elizabeth, by which Mary would have succeeded to the throne. The correspondence of those conspirators was seized by Elizabeth's spies, and another accusation was added to the list.

Elizabeth thought proper to prolong the captivity of the queen of Scotland for the space of nineteen years; she unceasingly overwhelmed her with humiliations, and, to aggravate the weight of her misery, several times held out to her the sweet hope of liberty. She was repeatedly transferred from one prison to another, but the place of confinement was Westminster, and the Queen of England paid the chief accuser, Murray, five thousand pounds to encourage his zeal. Elizabeth also excited James VI. to persecute his mother; and by her orders the governor of the prison to whose charge Mary was confided, Sir Amias Paulet, had a Catholic priest executed in front of her window for having displayed some interest for his unhappy sovereign.

In vain Mary offered to renounce all claim to the crown of England, in order to obtain her liberty; in vain the ambassadors of her brother-in-law, Henry III., the president de Bellière, Mes-

sieurs Fénélon, de Mauvissière, and de Châteauneuf, pleaded her cause with energy,—they were not heard. Elizabeth appointed a commission to try her on accusations threatening her life ; she was found guilty and condemned to death, and the Earls of Kent and Shrewsbury were sent to present the Queen of Scotland the warrant for her execution.

Mary employed her last days in consoling her attendants, amongst whom she distributed her trinkets, and wrote to the King of France and Catherine de Medicis ; she also wrote her confession, because she was not allowed a chaplain,—a favour usually accorded to the vilest of criminals.

The evening before her death, after supper, she drank to the health and welfare of all her devoted attendants, and requested them to pledge her : obedient to her wish, they all knelt around her, and, mingling their tears with their wine, drank to their mistress. She afterwards spent some time in devotion, and then sought repose, in order, as she said, to preserve her strength, that she might act with the dignity becoming a Christian and a queen.

At the break of day Mary arose and dressed herself with extraordinary care, in a robe of black velvet, which she reserved for the purpose of her execution ; after which she prayed, and communi-

cated with her own hands the sacred wafer, which had been consecrated and sent to her by the sovereign pontiff, Pius V. She requested her female attendants to assist her in her last moments, and, leaning on the arm of her faithful servant, Lord Melvil, firmly ascended the scaffold, which was erected at Fotheringhay Castle. Till the last moment the Earl of Kent reproached her with her superstition, and insulted the crucifix which she held in her hand. Her women took off her veil and ornaments; and when the executioner stepped forward to remove the collar from her neck, she gently repulsed him, saying that she was unaccustomed to be waited on by such attendants. When she declared herself prepared, he knelt and asked her pardon, which she accorded to him, as well as to all the authors of her death; and then, looking at the axe, she expressed her regret at not having her head taken off by a French sword. Mary then protested her innocence, embraced her friends with serious composure, had her eyes bandaged, during which she recited a Latin psalm aloud, and then laid her head upon the block. The executioner was so unskilful that he drove a part of the queen's head-dress into her skull, and her head was not severed from her body until the third stroke; the

headsman then held up, at the four corners of the scaffold, a head that had worn two crowns, as he would have exposed that of the most execrable villain.

Such was the tragical end of the beautiful Queen of Scots, in whose attachment to the religion of her birth, in whose rights to the throne of England, and in whose talents and beauty, consisted, according to some historians, all her crimes. The sweetness of her disposition, the graces of her mind, the protection with which she honoured letters, the success with which she cultivated them, her firmness in misfortunes, and her attachment for the religion of her fathers, have rendered her memory dear to all impartial persons, and especially to the Catholics, who consider her as having been a martyr to her religious principles.

She was executed at the age of forty-four, in 1587, and had passed the half of her days in captivity. Her destruction, whatever may have been her offences, moral or political, indelibly stains the character of the famous Queen Elizabeth.

After recounting the circumstances, and especially the crimes, attached to this queen's memory by the generality of historians, it would be doing her an injustice to omit remarking that there are

records in her favour, which are equally entitled to consideration. Even in the year of her death a work was published entitled 'Martyrdom of the Queen of Scotland, Dowager of France, containing a correct Dissertation on the perfidy done her at the instigation of Elizabeth, by which the calumnies and false accusations instituted against that most virtuous and illustrious Princess are exposed, and her innocence substantiated.' (Edinburgh: 2 vols. 8vo.) As the circumstances therein mentioned were of recent occurrence, and it would have been hardly possible to advance false statements at that time with impunity, this work merits some confidence. Also in a volume entitled 'Historical and Critical Researches on the principal Proofs of the Accusations brought against Mary Stuart, with an accurate Examination into the Histories of Dr. Robertson and Mr. Hume,' the truth of this queen's history is disputed with force and discrimination. This work was translated into the French language by Edme, in 1772. The author of these researches says that the correspondence attributed to her, as it exists at present in a work of Buchanan's, and believed to be original, is proved beyond doubt to be apocryphal. He represents the accusers of the queen as having been themselves the authors of the

crime which they imputed to their sovereign, and of having formed an association and sold themselves to Elizabeth; that the Earl of Murray, urged by ambition and the promise of Elizabeth's assistance, placed himself at the head of an insurrection for the purpose of killing Darnley, and taking possession of the queen's person; that he was constantly conspiring until the death of Darnley, which was his own act and that of his associates, Bothwell amongst others; that, in going to Stirling Castle to visit her son, Mary was arrested by eight hundred cavaliers, with Bothwell at their head, and compelled by a threat of imprisonment to give her hand to that nobleman, who was afterwards publicly proclaimed the murderer of Henry Stuart, and the queen his accomplice; by which apparent criminality of its sovereign the whole of Scotland rebelled.

Such are the facts amply detailed in the 'Researches' relative to Mary Stuart, which, if they may be credited, (and the author is supported by extracts which it appears unreasonable to oppose,) throw a new light on the history of this unfortunate princess, and offer the most natural explanation of the apparent inconsistencies in her character. One circumstance, at least, in her favour, is the

frankness of Camden, who, although the friend of Elizabeth, and protected by her, as, also a zealous partisan of the Reformed Church, not only refused to calumniate the Queen of Scotland, but candidly absolved her from all crime.

After her execution, Mary's corpse was embalmed by order of the sheriff of Northampton, and interred in the cathedral of Peterborough, near the tomb of Queen Catherine of Arragon. In 1612 James I. transferred his mother's remains to the royal sepulchre at Westminster.

Henry III. caused a magnificent funeral procession to take place in Paris in honour of Mary Stuart, whom he could neither defend nor avenge; and that was another weakness resulting from the disastrous policy of Catherine de Medicis.

QUEEN ELIZABETH OF AUSTRIA.

(Reign of Charles IX.)

ELIZABETH was daughter of the Emperor Maximilian II., and of Mary of Austria, grand-daughter of Charles Quint, and was born in 1554.

The negotiations for her marriage with Charles IX. were prolonged for nine years, during which

time Philip II. of Spain made many attempts to prevent this alliance of France and Germany, but the politic Catherine de Medicis and the Archbishop of Rheims triumphed over all these obstacles.

Villeroi, the secretary of state, was sent to Spain to redeem the clauses in the contract of the marriage, and Albert de Gondi, Marshal de Retz, solemnly espoused Elizabeth in the name of his sovereign, Charles IX., in the year 1570. The Elector of Mayence, who pronounced the nuptial benediction, was charged, in conjunction with three other dignitaries, to conduct the queen to France.

Notwithstanding the calamities with which the kingdom was afflicted, brilliant preparations were made for Elizabeth's reception. The king and the queen-mother met her at Mezières, the old fortress of which had been converted into an enchanting residence by the care and inventive genius of Catherine. Elizabeth entered Mezières in a carriage drawn by four white horses decorated with rich housings, and was saluted by a discharge of musketry and with military music. In the same triumphant manner she passed all through France, receiving pompous entertainment at every town,

and in 1571 was crowned and made her solemn entry into Paris.

At the period of their marriage Charles IX. was twenty years of age and Elizabeth sixteen; she joined to great physical advantages an amiable disposition and solid piety. Educated by virtuous parents in the principles of the most rigid morality, Elizabeth found herself isolated in the corrupt and infamous court of her husband and the queen-mother, "*Bien est vrai, quand elle était dans le lit à part, ou en cachette, ses rideaux très-bien tirés, elle se tenait toute à genoux, et priant Dieu, battant sa poitrine.*"

Catherine de Medicis considered her daughter-in-law too virtuous to communicate her intrigues or plots to her; and Charles, who honoured those merits in his wife which he did not possess himself, so carefully concealed the events of the night of St. Bartholomew, that the young queen was ignorant of the murderous act until awakened by the noise. On learning the dreadful cause of the confusion, she hastily inquired if the king was aware of it; and when informed that Charles IX. had ordered and assisted in the massacres, Elizabeth burst into tears, and, throwing herself on her knees,

implored divine pity and forgiveness for the author of this dreadful crime.

This queen took no part in the affairs of government, but secretly lamented the misfortunes and disorders of the state, under the administration of a prince whom she endeavoured to please, although acquainted with his attachment to another. She passed her time in writing memoirs on the history of the epoch, and in composing religious poetry. Bassompierre says that her writings were very curious, and it is a subject of much regret that they were suppressed. Elizabeth also spent much time in devotion, spoke little, and always in Spanish.

She was deeply grieved at the depravity of the women who surrounded her, and especially her sister-in-law Margaret de Valois, but was never heard to utter a jealous reproach against Charles for his infidelity, feeling, no doubt, that such conduct would not remedy the evil. Before his marriage the king had formed an attachment for Helena Bon de Mes-guillon, daughter of the Governor of Marseilles, and wife of Charles de Gondi de la Tour, grand master of the wardrobe, who, urged by jealousy, endeavoured to poison the king, but was prevented by his wife. It is said that Madame de Gondi, to revenge this attempt, retaliated in the

same manner upon her husband, and with success. Nevertheless, after the massacres of St. Bartholomew, in which Madame de Gondi lost a near relation, she coldly replied to the king's letters: when sought by him in person she was seized with an involuntary terror, which she could not repress at the sight of him; and to avoid his attentions retired to the convent of St. Magloire, where she obtained absolution from her brother-in-law, Peter de Gondi, Archbishop of Paris.

Charles afterwards attached himself to Marie Touchet, daughter of a judge of Orleans and of Marie Mathy. She was born at Gien in 1549, and received a brilliant education from her father, who was exceedingly clever. To the charms of agreeable conversation she added those of person, and nothing could more exactly describe her than the anagram of her name, Marie Touchet: "*ie charme tout.*"

At the period when Charles IX. first beheld Marie the court resided at Blois, so that the near neighbourhood of Orleans, and the king's numerous hunting excursions, afforded him many opportunities of seeing the young Orléannaise. For some time he magnanimously stifled his passion, but, not finding in the object of it an equally disinterested

auxiliary, he abandoned himself to its power, and Marie responded, or feigned to respond, to his attachment.

Charles first appointed her maid of honour to his sister Margaret de Valois, who professed great friendship for her. When the picture of his wife, Queen Elizabeth of Austria, was sent to the king, Marie, after attentively examining it, joyfully exclaimed "*L'Allemande ne me fait pas peur.*"

Marie is accused of having formed a *liaison* with Monsieur de Montluc, brother of the Archbishop of Valence, of which the king was informed; accordingly, when at supper, Charles took the reticule of his favourite, under pretext of admiring the tissue, and discovered in it a billet which she had received from that gentleman. Marie immediately threw herself at the king's feet, and succeeded in obtaining his pardon. Charles IX.'s affection for Marie Touchet never ceased but with his life, and in his last moments he charged Monsieur de la Tour to recommend her to the protection of the queen-mother.

She was twenty-five years of age when his death occurred, but the event did not change her position at court, for she had been bountifully enriched by Charles, and the indifference she had always manifested for state affairs had gained her the attach-

ment of Catherine de Medicis, who beheld her there without suspicion.

At the death of his wife, Jacqueline de Rohan, the Lord of Balzac d'Entraigues married Marie Touchet, in 1578, and had two daughters by her, Henrietta Marquise de Verneuil, and Marie, who lived for ten years with the Marshal de Bassompierre.

After her marriage Madame d'Entraigues became strict in her principles of morality, having, it is said, killed with her own hands one of her pages who attempted some liberties with her youngest daughter; nevertheless, she and her husband suffered the eldest to become the mistress of Henry IV. for a promise of marriage upon certain conditions, and the sum of one hundred thousand crowns.

In 1610, the death of Henry IV. having deprived her family of all influence at court, Madame d'Entraigues devoted herself to retirement. Possessed of an extensive library, of which Plutarch was her favourite author, she passed the remainder of her life in those studies which formed the charm of her solitude, and peaceably terminated her long career, at the age of eighty-nine, in the year 1638. She was buried in the convent of the Minimes in the Place Royale at Paris. Madame d'Entraigues had

two children by Charles IX., one of whom died young; the other was Charles de Valois, Grand Prior of France, Count d'Auvergne, and Duke of Angoulême.

Although the good Queen Elizabeth did not resent this attachment of Charles, she avoided associating with the favourite, as well as the court in general; she opposed gentleness to his violence, and the king avowed that he was unworthy of so virtuous a wife. When, struck by the avenging hand of Providence, he expiated his crimes by a frightful disease and the stings of remorse, Elizabeth sought, on her knees, by the death-bed of her husband, to appease, by sincere prayers, the Divine displeasure; and the expiring king recommended his wife to the protection of his successor and the King of Navarre.

On becoming a widow, in 1574, the queen left the court for the château of Amboise, where her daughter, Mary Elizabeth, was being educated. After a short visit to this residence, she quitted France in 1575, and proceeded to Vienna, the court of her brother Rodolphe, Emperor of Germany; it was in that city that she founded the monastery of Saint Claire, where she afterwards resided, and formed, until her death, a model of all the virtues.

Elizabeth possessed the provinces of Berri, Bourbon, Forez, and la Marche, which she governed wisely; she would not suffer the magistracies to be sold, but charged her agent in France, Monsieur Busbecq, to select the most eligible persons for the office. Her revenues were devoted to acts of utility and charity; each year she generously endowed a certain number of young ladies who were without fortune; and erected an establishment for those to retire to who had formed dishonourable attachments.

Her sister-in-law, Margaret de Valois, who was detained at the château d'Usson in a state of restriction bordering on indigence, by the severity of her offended husband, Henry IV., owed many benefits to her generosity. Elizabeth shared her fortune with Margaret, who, though she had lived a life of immorality and depravity, was sensible of the worth and merits of that queen, to whom she was most grateful, and whose death so deeply affected her, that her grief carried her to the borders of the tomb.

Elizabeth was perseveringly asked in marriage by Philip II., King of Spain, and her brother-in-law, Henry III. of France; but she refused a second marriage, and died, at the age of thirty-eight, in the convent of Saint Claire in Vienna, where she was buried in 1592.

QUEEN LOUISA OF LORRAINE.

(Reign of Henry III.)

HENRY III., who was one of the most capricious of princes, was, when Duke of Anjou, affianced first to Catherine of Navarre, sister of Henry IV., and afterwards to Anne, daughter of the King of Poland, whom he succeeded to that throne. The first marriage was broken off by Catherine de Medicis, as it did not accord with her political views; Anne's extreme ugliness caused the rupture of the second by the prince himself, who sighed for the hand of the beautiful Elizabeth, sister to the King of Sweden, but the difference of their religion placed an obstacle to that union, and Henry next declared the Princess of Condé the only woman worth loving.

Brantôme says that Mary de Cleves, Princess of Condé, and her two sisters, the Duchesses of Nevers and Guise, all daughters of Francis de Cleves and Margaret de Bourbon Vendôme, were surnamed the three Graces. The young Mary de Cleves was given in marriage to her cousin, Henry I. Prince de Condé, in 1572, in order that by her charms and persuasions he might be converted to the Catholic religion.

The Duke of Anjou, then young, handsome, and a conqueror, was also very amiable, and at that time possessed the energy of character and nobility of sentiment which he afterwards unfortunately lost. By his conquests at Jarnac and Montcontour, he gained the admiration of all Europe, who formed hopes which in the end proved vain illusions. This prince was greatly captivated with the attractions of the Princess de Condé, and used every effort to obtain a responding sentiment; he even procured the assistance of his sister Margaret Queen of Navarre, and of the Duke de Guise, Mary's brother-in-law, but without success, although she was not insensible to his protestations for her.

While Henry was thus eagerly pursuing the Princess de Condé, Catherine de Medicis, who feared that his attachment would induce him to wed her, if her marriage was dissolved on account of her husband's heresy, and who thought also that her own power would be weakened should the princess be raised to the throne, introduced to his notice one of her most beautiful maids of honour, named Renée de Rieux de Châteauneuf, daughter of an illustrious family of Brittany, John de Rieux and Beatrix de Touchères. Mademoiselle Châteauneuf, who was the very type of beauty, had a complexion

of dazzling white, and a profusion of fair hair. This young lady, who obtained universal admiration, attracted also the regard of the prince, who composed sonnets to her charms and made her presents; the young lady replied to his letters in verse, and this sentimental correspondence continued until the intimacy of the prince and Renée de Rieux was made public.

Mademoiselle de Châteauneuf continued to retain the volatile heart of Henry until, when elected King of Poland, he was obliged, in 1573, to take possession of his kingdom. On quitting France he confided all his jewels to Renée, with whom he constantly kept up an affectionate correspondence, and it is said, signed his letters with his blood.

Henry would, however, have resigned the crown of Poland for the possession of the Princess de Condé, whose memory haunted him; he paid little or no attention to the affairs of his government, but passed his time in writing long letters to her as well as to Mademoiselle de Châteauneuf.

The princess lived in great retirement during Henry's absence, and devoted her existence to cherishing the recollection of a love which she had so vigorously combated. At length the death of Charles IX. brought Henry back to France, where

he ascended the throne under the title of Henry III. in 1574.

Although the king lived a disgraceful life with his favourites, he still reserved his sentiments of affection and esteem for the Princess de Condé, and expressed his desire to have her marriage dissolved, in order to espouse her. The queen-mother made every effort to dissuade her son from this project, but in vain. The unfortunate princess died suddenly at the Louvre, in 1574, at the age of eighteen, poisoned, it is said, during her accouchement, after having given birth to Catherine de Bourbon de Condé; and this was doubtless another catastrophe resulting from the politic machinations of Catherine de Medicis.

On receiving the news of her death, the king fell down senseless, and great fears were entertained for his life. For three days he refused to take food; he put on deep mourning and wore a long rosary of small ivory skulls; he also had deaths'-heads painted on his shoe-ribbons.

At length, time, which triumphs over all, restored him to himself; indifference was soon begotten, and to indifference succeeded forgetfulness; moreover, Henry remembered with satisfaction the attractions of Louisa of Lorraine, whom he had seen at Nancy,

at the court of her cousin, Charles III. Duke of Lorraine, when on his journey to take possession of the crown of Poland. Louisa was admired for the regularity of her features, the elegance of her figure, her fair complexion, and sweet disposition, but she possessed little talent.

This princess was the eldest daughter of Louis Count de Vaudemont, Duke de Mercœur, of the House of Lorraine, and of Margaret d'Egmont; she was born at Nomény in 1554. Her first misfortune was the loss of her mother, whose death occurred at her birth, but her place was supplied by the affectionate care of her father's second wife, Jane of Savoy. The ignorance of the age was such that her whole education consisted in her acquaintance with the Lives of the Saints; and, surrounded by governesses who filled her young mind with superstitious notions, Louisa mingled erroneous belief with her pious principles.

Her hand was sought by the Counts of Luxembourg and Salm; but on Henry's sending his friend du Gast, in 1575, with a proposal of marriage, the offer was accepted, for Louisa had been less fortunate in her father's third wife, Catherine d'Aumale, who had treated her unkindly, but who, on learning the elevation of her daughter-in-law, endeavoured to

repair the wrong, by being the first to announce to her that she was Queen of France, and rendering her homage; she even begged forgiveness for the wrongs she had done her, and implored her influence in favour of her children.

Louisa could not recover from her astonishment until the unanimous compliments she received from all sides realised her dream of happiness, which had nearly vanished by the coquetry of her cousin, Mary d'Elbeuf, who accompanied her to Rheims to be present at her marriage and consecration. Mademoiselle d'Elbeuf, who was as artful as Louisa was innocent, endeavoured to captivate the weak king by exercising all the seductions of her graces and intellect; and, astonished at the progress she made towards the monarch's heart, pushed her intrigues so far that, had it not been for the spirit of the quick-sighted and all-powerful Catherine de Medicis, who desired to have a slave upon the throne and not a rival, she would have succeeded in obtaining the crown destined for her cousin. She persuaded the king that Louisa's calmness proceeded from indifference, and that she sacrificed by her marriage with him her love for the Count de Salm, and that grief robbed the throne of its charms in her eyes: however, the queen-mother triumphed,

and the marriage was celebrated with great magnificence in the cathedral of Rheims in 1575.

The king was so captivated with Louisa's appearance in her royal robes, that he passed the greater part of the day of her consecration in assisting at her toilette, which occupied so long a time that the ceremony did not take place until five o'clock in the evening.

At this epoch luxury made great innovations in the style of dress worn at court. Catherine de Medicis had brought from Italy false hair, paint, patches, and perfumes; the king, Henry III., covered his face with a cosmetic preparation at night, which in the morning was washed off. The ladies also, to preserve their complexions, wore a species of mask, called "*loups*" on account of their hideous aspect; and that frivolous fashion lasted until the time of Louis XIV., who, on taking the reins of government, commenced *his* career of gallantry, and introduced a more refined taste.

The king declared he had never seen anything half so beautiful as his royal spouse; but her manners were cold and reserved in the midst of all her grandeur, and when the novelty which the sight of her beautiful face first produced had worn off,

Henry ceased to attribute her unimpassioned temperament to gentleness and modesty.

Catherine de Medicis also, fearing the influence of the Guises in opposition to her ambitious views, endeavoured to break the union she had assisted to form. She had not much difficulty in persuading the king that the queen's insensibility arose from her constant attachment to the Count de Salm; and on the other side, she persuaded Louisa's confessor to make her understand that she should not shut her eyes upon the king's infidelities, as they were an offence to religion as well as to conjugal faith.

The queen, who was as credulous as she was devout, was the victim of these perfidious manoeuvres. She did not hesitate to complain to her husband of his assiduities to Mademoiselle Châteauneuf; and the king, who was astonished that a princess whom he had raised to the throne should presume to oppose his inclination, attributed it to the advice of her former governess, Madame de Champi, whom, in spite of the queen's tears and prayers, he dismissed from court, as well as all the other women of her father's house.

Louisa bore her griefs in solitude, and the king, surrounded by his favourites, grew indifferent to

her: far from trying to regain her husband's heart, she gave herself up to practices of devotion, neglected her dress, and appeared even to forget that she was queen.

The queen-mother, however, from interested motives, changed her plan, and reconciled the king and queen; and Louisa, whose innocence the king had really never doubted, became his friend and confidant; there was but one point on which they differed—Henry considered the Guises his enemies; Louisa looked upon them as the defenders of her religion, and under that idea was interested in them from her cradle; and when they were assassinated by the king's order, Louisa sent a courier to her brother, the Duke de Mercœur, to warn him, and thus saved his liberty, and perhaps his life.

After the reconciliation of the king and queen, Renée de Rieux had the imprudence to appear at one of the court balls in a similar dress, and with the same description of jewels, as the queen; and this affront so irritated Louisa and the queen-mother that Mademoiselle de Châteauneuf received her dismissal.

Henry proposed to the Count de Brienne Luxembourg, who had formerly sought the hand of Louisa of Lorraine, to marry Renée; he said to

that nobleman, "Comte, j'ai épousé votre maîtresse; il faut que vous épousiez la mienne." This proposal, seriously made, resembled an order; the Count of Luxembourg respectfully but proudly declined, and immediately quitted the kingdom. Henry then projected a marriage for her with Duprat de Nantouillet, Provost of Paris. This man had publicly calumniated Mademoiselle de Châteauneuf before Henry's accession, and to revenge the insult, Renée, who was one day riding on horseback and met him on foot, galloped over him and trampled him under her horse's hoofs. She was, however, desirous to marry him when discarded by the king, but Nantouillet refused her hand; to resent which refusal, the Kings of France and Navarre, having requested to sup with the provost, pillaged his house; upon which occasion he lost a valuable gold vase and fifty thousand livres.

Mademoiselle de Châteauneuf's pride did not prevent her from offering her hand to a Florentine, who married her, but whom she afterwards stabbed with her own hands in a fit of jealousy in 1577.

The king, who cherished the recollection of his attachment to Renée de Rieux, suffered this crime to go unpunished, and even gave her the lands of Castellanne when she contracted a second marriage

with the Baron Philip d'Altonvittis. This husband also perished by violence, having conspired against Henry d'Angoulême, Grand Prior of France, who discovered the plot and shot him in 1586. The Baroness de Castellanne retired to her castle in the Alps, and died at an advanced age, leaving one daughter, Marseille d'Altonvittis, who was celebrated for her poetical genius.

After the disgrace of Mademoiselle de Châteauneuf, Madame de Sauves, who was surnamed the "*Circe*," attracted the attention of Henry III., who had rivals in the Duke de Guise and the King of Navarre; and this lady's address alone prevented these three illustrious princes from having a serious dispute on her account. She was born in 1551, and was daughter of Beauve de Semblançay, who was superintendent of finances under three kings—Charles VIII., Louis XII., and Francis I. When very young she was married to the secretary of state, Simon de Fizes, Baron de Sauves, and possessed a handsome fortune in addition to her personal advantages, and, being a great adept in intrigue, was a favourite of Catherine de Medicis, who appointed her "*dame d'atours*."

Henry King of Navarre, who went to the court of France for the purpose of marrying Margaret

de Valois, was much struck with the beauty of Madame de Sauves, who accepted his homage. His departure left the Duke of Guise in possession of the fair Charlotte de Sauves, who would have saved his life if he would have listened to her advice, as she proceeded to Blois, where the king had convoked the states, for the express purpose of persuading him to quit the town, having had reason to fear the monarch's vengeance towards her lover. The duke was, however, deaf to her tears and prayers, and, half an hour after he quitted her on the following morning, was assassinated. Madame de Sauves then devoted herself to Henry III., whose death in 1576 put an end to her attachment; but being still young and rich, she married Francis de la Tremouille, Marquis de Noirmoutier, by whom she had a son, Louis de la Tremouille. She never forgot the sentiments she had entertained for the King of Navarre after he became King of France, for to her advice he owed a part of the success he obtained at the battle of Coutras. The Marchioness of Noirmoutier died at Paris in 1617, aged sixty-six years.

Henry III., on proceeding with an army to oppose the League, advised the queen to retire to Chinon in Tourraine, where she lived in retirement,

and with great simplicity. She dressed plainly and modestly, and daily visited the prisoners, for whom she established Divine worship. It was in this residence that she was informed of the king's assassination at Saint Cloud, in 1589, by the monk James Clement. On receiving the news she fainted, and was for some days dangerously ill. When dying, Henry traced with a feeble and trembling hand these lines:—"Ma mie, vous avez su comme j'ai été misérablement blessé; j'espère que ce ne sera rien; priez Dieu pour moi; adieu, ma mie!"

This catastrophe excited a degree of energy in the heart of Louisa of which she had hitherto appeared incapable. She conceived a detestation for the League, and the fallacious principles which it fomented under the veil of religion. Convinced that her relations had instigated the murder of her husband, she vowed an eternal hatred to them, refused to see them, and unceasingly solicited their punishment. When Henry IV.'s authority was established, she entreated him and the parliament to grant her justice for his death; and in 1594, at a public assemblage in Mantes, solemnly renewed her demand for the punishment of the king's murderers.

Until the time of the revolution, Louisa's cabinet at Chenonceaux was still seen as she had left it; the

hangings were, it is said, black and stained with tears. Her latter years were devoted to pious foundations and pilgrimages, and she submitted to fasts and austerities which abridged her days. She died at the château of Moulins in 1601, and was interred at Paris in the convent of the Capucines, which Henry IV. built at her request. During the revolution her remains were transferred to the cemetery of l'Est; and afterwards, in 1817, from thence to the royal sepulchre of Saint Denis.

She had but one child, who died at its birth. The streets of Paris were first lighted by order of this queen, who established the custom of fixing the images of saints at the corners of the streets, in honour of which statues, lamps were burnt near them throughout the night.

With Henry III. ends the branch of Valois, whose era is remarkable for the two distinctive characteristics of cruelty and licentiousness.

END OF VOL. I.



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